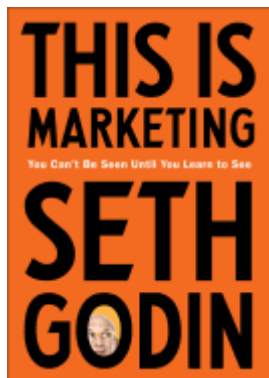


DEREK SIVERS



THIS IS MARKETING - BY SETH GODIN

ISBN: 0525540830

DATE READ: 2019-08-02

HOW STRONGLY I RECOMMEND IT: 9/10

(SEE [MY LIST OF 200+ BOOKS](#), FOR MORE.)

Go to the [Amazon page](#) for details and reviews.

A must-read for every entrepreneur. A holistic, generous, human, emotional, long-term, story-driven approach to your business. The world would be a much better place if businesses were led this way. You'll have a competitive advantage if you do this, since so few do.

MY NOTES

Marketing in five steps:

1. Invent a thing worth making, with a story worth telling, and a contribution worth talking about.
2. Design and build it in a way that a few people will particularly benefit from and care about.
3. Tell a story that matches the built-in narrative and dreams of that tiny group of people, the smallest viable market.
4. Spread the word.
5. Show up - regularly, consistently, and generously, for years and years - to organize and lead and build confidence in the change you seek to make.

Anchor your work deeply in the dreams, desires, and communities of those you

seek to serve.

Do work that matters for people who care.

Making is insufficient. You haven't made an impact until you've changed someone.

Resonate with the listener. Tell them something they've been waiting to hear.
Invite them on a journey where a change might happen.

The best way to complain is to make things better.

It doesn't make any sense to make a key and then run around looking for a lock to open. The only productive solution is to find a lock and then fashion a key.

If you want to make change, begin by making culture. Begin by organizing a tightly knit group. Begin by getting people in sync.

Ask, "Who's it for?" to focus your actions.

Change is best made with intent. "What's it for?"

What you say isn't nearly as important as what others say about you.

People don't want what you make. They want what it will do for them. They want belonging, connection, peace of mind, status.

Humans are lonely. They want to be seen and known. People want to be part of something.

Create experiences.

Using a product, engaging with a service, calling customer service. Each of these actions is part of the story; each builds a little bit of our connection.

Offer these experiences with intent, doing them on purpose.

If you have to choose a thousand people to become your true fans, who should you choose?

Worldview: A worldview is the shortcut, the lens each of us uses when we see the world. It's our assumptions and biases and stereotypes about the world around us.

Pursuit of mass will make you boring, because mass means average.

Begin instead with the smallest viable market.

What's the minimum number of people you would need to influence to make it worth the effort?

Be choosy about which people.

Choose the people who want what you're offering.

Choose the people most open to hearing your message.

Choose the people who will tell the right other people

Specific means accountable. It worked or it didn't.

Are you hiding behind everyone or anyone?

You'll never be able to serve everyone, which is comforting, since you're less likely to be disappointed when it doesn't happen.

Find a corner of the market that can't wait for your attention.

Overwhelm this group's wants and dreams and desires with your care, your attention, and your focus. Make profound change happen.

Figure out the simplest useful version of your product, engage with the market, and then improve and repeat.

Loving you is a way of expressing themselves. Becoming part of your movement is an expression of who they are.

That love becomes part of their identity, a chance to do something that feels right. To express themselves through their contributions, their actions, and the badge they wear.

Instead of talking about prospects and customers, we could call them your “students” instead.

What will they benefit from learning? Are they open to being taught? What will they tell others?

We must say “It’s not for you.”

You’re not going to waste their time, pander to them, or insist that they change their beliefs.

It shows respect for those you seek to serve, to say to them, “I made this for you. Not for the other folks, but for you.”

I’m doing this for people who believe _____.

I will focus on people who want _____.

I promise that engaging with what I make will help you get _____.

Match the worldview of the people being served.

Show up in the world with a story that they want to hear, told in a language they’re eager to understand.

Make it easy to spread.

If every member brings in one more member, within a few years, you’ll have more members than you can count.

Earn, and keep, the attention and trust of those you serve.

Offer ways to go deeper.

Sonder is defined as that moment when you realize that everyone around you has an internal life as rich and as conflicted as yours.

Everyone wants something that they can't possibly have. And if they could have it, they'd discover that they didn't really want it all along.

Everyone is lonely, insecure, and a bit of a fraud.

And everyone cares about something.

Find a spot on the map with edges that (some) people want to find.

Signal so that people who are looking for you can easily find you.

We're this, not that.

Dog food is for dog owners (not dogs). It's for the way it makes them feel — the satisfaction of taking care of an animal.

The people you seek to serve care about a range of inputs and emotions, not simply a contest for who's the cheapest.

Choose your extremes and you choose your market. And vice versa.

Neophiliacs = early adopters.

Neophiliacs get a thrill from discovery, they enjoy the tension of "This might not work," and they get pleasure from bragging about their discoveries.

Neophiliacs are very forgiving of missteps from those who seek to innovate with them, and incredibly unforgiving after the initial thrill of discovery wears off.

You can't be perfect in the eyes of an early adopter; the best you can do is be interesting.

Sometimes, you'll be creating interesting new work for people who are easily bored.

And sometimes, you'll build products and services that last, that can extend beyond the tiny group of neophiliacs and reach and delight the rest of the market.

Draw a simple XY grid.

Pick two axes.

For each axis, choose something that people care about:

Speed
Price
Convenience
Performance
Ingredients
Purity
Sustainability
Obviousness
Maintenance costs
Safety
Edginess
Distribution
Network effect
Imminence
Visibility
Trendiness
Privacy
Popularity
Professionalism
Difficulty
Elitism
Danger
Experimental
Healthfulness

--

Different offerings on this X-Y axis treat different people differently. They don't compete; they're simply on the same board.

When you look at the list of available attributes, it's tempting to pick the ones that most people care about. After all, it's hard work to claim an edge, and to pick one that few people care about seems foolish. Better, we think, to pick the popular one. If you do, you'll certainly be choosing a crowded quadrant.

It's very difficult to grow in a quadrant that's crowded.

The alternative is to build your own quadrant. To find two axes that have been overlooked. That puts you in a position where you are the clear and obvious choice.

Outsource the tasks and find the guts to do emotional labor instead.

The most frustrated marketers I know are the ones who take it as a given that because they are in industry x, they have no freedom.

They do precisely what the others do.

Boosting our posts, counting our followers, and creating ever more content in the hope of being noticed.

There are so many other ways to make an impact and earn trust.

A decade ago, it took a dedicated team of publishers, print brokers, and sales reps to get a book to be available nationwide. Now a Kindle book can be published by one smart person with a digital file.

We made the “doing” easier, which is precisely why we need to outsource that part of our job and focus all our energy onto the hard work of making change happen.

We still talk about being very good at our craft as if it’s some sort of bizarre exception. Plenty of people are good at what you do.

Quality is required but no longer sufficient.

Your customers know more than you do about your competitors. And so your commodity work is not enough.

If we merely try to fill a hole in the market, we’re doomed: driven by scarcity, focused on market share.

The alternative is to find and build and earn your story.

Once you claim a story, you’re on the hook to deliver.

Authenticity in the marketplace is a myth.

What people want is to be understood and to be served, not merely to witness whatever you feel like doing in a given moment.

You are not expected (or welcome) to bring us every one of your insecurities, innermost fears, and urgent demands. You're here to serve.

Emotional labor is the work of doing what we don't feel like doing. It's about showing up with a smile when we're wincing inside.

If you need to be authentic to do your best work, you're not a professional.

Exert emotional labor in search of empathy - the empathy to imagine what someone else would want, what they might believe, what story would resonate with them.

We don't do this work because we feel like it in the moment. We do this work, this draining emotional labor, because we're professionals, and because we want to make change happen.

Emotional labor is the work we do to provide service.

What do people want? If you ask them, you probably won't find what you're looking for.

It's our job to watch people, figure out what they dream of, and then create a transaction that can deliver that feeling.

People are intimately aware of their wants (which they think of as needs) but they are absolutely terrible at inventing new ways to address those wants.

They often prefer to use a familiar solution to satisfy their wants, even if it's not working very well.

The seven billion people on this planet share a basket of desires:

Adventure

Affection

Avoiding new things

Belonging

Community

Control
Creativity
Delight
Freedom of expression
Freedom of movement
Friendship
Good looks
Health
Learning new things
Luxury
Nostalgia
Obedience
Participation
Peace of mind
Physical activity
Power
Reassurance
Reliability
Respect
Revenge
Romance
Safety
Security
Sex
Strength
Sympathy
Tension

Artists don't need many colors to paint an original masterpiece. Just address these desires.

The people who are happy with boring are actively avoiding you.

The only people we can serve are curious, dissatisfied, or bored.

Make an assertion. Outline a promise. Choose your extremes, find the people you seek to change, and show up with your offer.

Call it a test if you want to. But it's real life. The real life of engaging with what's possible, and of working with people who want to make a change.

Always be seeking, connecting, solving, asserting, believing, seeing, and yes, testing.

Sometimes you'll be right. But most of the time, you'll be wrong. That's okay.

What could make a book worth two hundred dollars? Or a hotel room worth fifteen hundred dollars?

"More of the same" is the wrong answer.

We don't pay ten times extra for more words.

Instead, it's a different extreme.

People bend themselves into a pretzel trying to please the anonymous masses before they have fifty or one hundred people who would miss them if they were gone.

Instead of asking for feedback, seek advice, like this:

"I made something that I like, that I thought you'd like. How'd I do? What advice do you have for how I could make it fit your worldview more closely?"

It's worth the effort to insulate ourselves from a raw emotional onslaught and to tease out substantial useful direction instead.

At the heart of the exclusive organization is a simple truth: every member is "people like us." Sign up for that and you gain status. Walk away and you lose it.

To change a culture, begin with an exclusive cohort.

Your work is a tree. The roots live in the soil of dreams and desires of those you

seek to serve.

If your work is simply a commodity, a quick response to an obvious demand, then your roots don't run deep. It's unlikely that your tree will grow, or even if it does, it's unlikely to be seen as important, useful, or dominant. It will be crowded out by all the similar trees.

As your tree grows, it creates a beacon for the community.

The early adopters among the people you seek to serve can engage with the tree, climb it, use it for shade, and, eventually, eat the fruits. And they attract the others. If you have planned well, the tree will quickly grow taller, because the sun isn't being blocked - there are few other trees in the same area.

As the tree grows, it not only attracts other people, but its height (as the dominant choice in the neighborhood) blocks out the futile efforts of other, similar trees.

The market likes a winner.

It's a mistake to show up with an acorn and expect a crowd.

A pattern interrupt requires some sort of jolt.

Tension is created, and energy is diverted to consider this new input.

Is it something worth considering? Most of the time, for most of those you seek to reach, the answer is no because the patterns are established, time is precious, and risk is something to be feared.

If you want someone who has never hired a gardener to hire you to be their gardener, you're asking for a pattern interrupt.

The pattern requires undoing before you can earn forward motion.

When life interferes, new patterns are established.

This is why it's so profitable to market to new dads, engaged women, and people who have recently moved.

They don't have a pattern to match, so it's all an interrupt.

The best time to market a new app is when the platform is brand new.

When you market to someone who doesn't have a pattern yet, you don't have to persuade them that their old choices were mistakes.

Why do some people hesitate to ask a question during a class, but will happily answer the professor if they're called on?

The teacher applies focused social tension in the form of publicly calling on a student.

The tension was sufficient to overcome his or her inertia.

We create tension when we ask someone.

We're using one force (social engagement) to overcome another force (the status quo).

Launch a new project and, in addition to serving your audience, you'll be breaking something.

The very existence of an alternative causes something else to no longer be true.

When you launch an extreme (the most efficient, the least expensive, the most convenient), then whatever you've exceeded is no longer the extreme that its fans sought out.

The tension people face any time they're about to cross a threshold:

The tension of this might work versus this might not work.

The tension of, "If I learn this, will I like who I become?"

All effective education creates tension, because just before you learn something, you're aware you don't know it (yet).

When they started building fancy casinos in Las Vegas, it created tension for countless travelers.

Visitors who just a year earlier were happy in Reno or in downtown Las Vegas now felt like second-class citizens. They asked, "Am I the sort of person who goes to a casino this run-down?"

The very existence of a fancier alternative degraded their experience at their former favorite.

The desire to change our status, or to protect it, drives almost everything we do.

It's a mistake to believe that everyone wants to make their status higher. In fact,

few people do.

It's also a mistake to believe that no one wants to make their status lower. If you've been conditioned to see yourself in a certain status role, you might fight to maintain and even lower your status.

Status is always relative. It's about perception of status relative to others in the group.

Status is in the eyes of the beholder.

Status has inertia. We're more likely to work to maintain our status (high or low) than we are to try to change it.

Status is learned. Our beliefs about status start early. And yet the cohort we are with can influence our perception of our status in very little time.

Shame is the status killer. If we accept the shame someone sends our way, it undermines our entire narrative about relative status.

Focus on those with low status instead of yourself.

One can enjoy as much status by letting someone into the flow of traffic as they can from cutting him off.

The status that comes from the community. The status of respect in return for contribution, for caring, for seeing and being in sync with others. Especially others with no ability to repay you.

This type of status is not "I'm better."

It's "I'm connected. I'm family."

For a local craftsperson, status means hunkering down in a single neighborhood until a reputation is assured.

Dominion is a vertical experience, above or below.

Affiliation is a horizontal one: Who's standing next to me?

When we pick up a book that feels self-published, we treat it differently than the book that reminds us of a classic we read in high school.

The internet is littered with websites, emails, and videos made by amateurs. Amateurs who made something that they liked. Which is fine.

But what a professional does for you is design something that other people will like. They create a look and feel that reminds people of their sort of magic.

What a good designer offers you: The chance to fit in.

You might choose to hire a great designer instead. Someone who can break the expectation and talk differently, but not so differently that you don't resonate with those you seek to connect with.

What's your brand? Hint: it's not your logo.

In a super-crowded world, a brand is a shorthand for the customer's expectations. What promise do they think you're making?

Make a list of five logos you admire.

Each one represents a brand you admire. Almost no one picks a swastika or the clever glyph of the bank who ripped them off.

Logos are so wrapped up in the brand promise that we imbue them with all the powers of the brand, ignoring the pixels involved.

It's possible for a terrible logo to adorn a fabulous brand (like the complicated mermaid of Starbucks).

Pick a logo, don't spend a ton of money, and keep it for as long as you keep your first name.

If someone is satisfied with what they have, you're unlikely to have the time or the money to reach out to them directly and cause them to become dissatisfied.

Begin with the neophiliacs, the folks with a problem that you can solve right now

(novelty and tension and the endless search for better).

Neophiliacs want to go first.

They want hope and possibility and magic.

They want the thrill of it working and the risk that it might not.

They want the pleasure of showing their innovation to the rest.

Treat different people differently.

When you find someone who is eager to talk about what you do, give them something to talk about.

Treat different people differently.

When you find someone who is itching to become a generous leader, give them the resources to lead.

You'll serve many people. You'll profit from a few.

Seek out and delight the few.

Treat different people differently.

While everyone has a platform, not everyone is using it.

We can list tactics.

Strategy is the umbrella over your tactics.

If you tell your competition your tactics, they'll steal them and it will cost you.

But if you tell them your strategy, it won't matter.

Direct marketing is action oriented. And it is measured.

Brand marketing is culturally oriented. And it can't be measured.

If you run an ad on Facebook and count your clicks, and then measure how many of them convert, you're doing direct marketing.

If you're buying direct marketing ads, measure everything.

If you're buying brand marketing ads, refuse to measure. Instead, be consistent and patient.

Overinvest in the way your team interacts with customers.

Every slice of every interaction ought to reflect the whole.

Every time we see any of you, we ought to be able to make a smart guess about all of you.

We remember the things that we see again and again.

Marketers forget this because we get bored with our stuff, so we change it.

SEO is the practice of ranking high in the search results for a generic term.

The path isn't to be found when someone types in a generic term. The path is to have someone care enough about you and what you create that they'll type in your name. That they'll be looking for you, not a generic alternative.

Say bread ingredients cost \$1.95.

The baker who charges \$2 a loaf has to sell twenty-one loaves for every loaf the luxury baker sells at \$3.

Twenty-one times as many is the difference between a few customers an hour or a line out the door.

“But our customers would prefer to pay the lower price.”?

Perhaps. But how do they value the sparkling clean shop, with plenty of well-paid and helpful staff, a new sign in the window, and a local baseball team with new jerseys with your logo on them? How do they value the handsome shopping bag that comes with every loaf, not to mention the free samples of the little butter cookies you call punitions?

How does it make them feel to tell their friends that they're eating the same bread that's served at the fancy restaurant down the street?

Better to apologize for the price once than to have to excuse a hundred small slights again and again.

Price is a signal.

“Cheap” is another way to say “scared”.

When you're the cheapest, you're not promising change. You're promising the same, but cheaper.

Two offerings, married to each other:

1. Free ideas that spread.
2. Expensive expressions of those ideas that are worth paying for.

Real permission works like this: If you stop showing up, people are concerned. They ask where you went.

Facebook and other social platforms seem like a shortcut, because they make it apparently easy to reach new people.

But the tradeoff is that you're a sharecropper. It's not your land.

You don't have permission to contact people; they do. You don't own an asset; they do.

Every author of ideas needs to own a permission asset, the privilege of contacting people without a middleman.

Media stunts come from a place of selfishness.

The best reason someone talks about you is because they're actually talking about themselves: "Look at how good my taste is."

Or perhaps, "Look at how good I am at spotting important ideas."

The best way to earn trust is through action. We remember what you did long after we forget what you said.

Marketers spend a lot of time talking, and on working on what we're going to say. We need to spend far more time doing.

Becoming an outlier isn't a strategy. It's a wish.

To satisfy the early adopters, you may just need to annoy the masses.

The middle of the curve isn't eagerly adopting. They're barely adapting.

The very thing your innovation did (break things) is the one thing that the mass market doesn't want to happen.

Two simple questions:

What will I tell my friends?

Why will I tell them?

A simple three-step narrative for action: the story of self, the story of us, and the story of now.

1. Story of self gives you standing, a platform from which to speak. Story of transition from who you used to be to who you became. Story of self is your chance to explain that you are people like us. That you did things like this. That your actions led to a change, one we can hear and see and understand.
2. Story of us is the kernel of a tribe. Why are we alike? Why should we care? How we will benefit when we're part of people like us.
3. Story of now is the critical pivot. It enlists the tribe on your journey. It's the peer opportunity/peer pressure of the tribe that will provide the tension for all of us to move forward, together. If we leave the others behind, it won't work. The urgency of now requires that we do it together, without delay, without remorse, without giving in to our fear.