

# IOTA Marketing: Initial Diagnostics

It's been just over a week since the [announcement](#) that I was going to work in the role of marketing advisor to IOTA, so I thought I'd share some first impressions and an initial diagnostics.

My goal here is basically to do the "forensics." Like a physician, I want to diagnose before I prescribe (for the most part) so that we know our weight, cholesterol, etc. and then figure out what the best course of action is for our goal (win the Olympic gold medal of decentralization, of course).

I am sharing my thought process deliberately so you understand not only what I see, but how I see it and, if you see something that I've missed, you can point it out.

You all are the key to our success, so I want to get your thoughts, which is why I am sharing it.

If you are already prepared to sign up to help IOTA marketing cause, you can fill [out this form now](#).

## **Obligatory Preamble ;-)**

*I'm going to caveat the hell out of stuff (or maybe cover my ass?) and say that getting the marketing ship ready for sea, as it were, and aligned is going to take some time.*

*A community of this size, with a market cap and presence that IOTA has, the number of partners, FUDers, and observers is like an aircraft carrier (or maybe a 747 if you prefer airplanes). You don't just start sailing.*

*That being said, this is a start-up (of sorts) in a rapidly moving and dynamic market. We can't just go into dry dock (to keep the analogy going) for 3 years and wait until everything isn't perfect.*

*The challenge of solid growth marketing, in my opinion, is the skill of being able to "drive the car while you build it." (Man, my analogies are all over the place today.)*

## **The Strengths: What do we do really well that we should build upon?**

1. Community, community, community.

The reason I got into marketing is because I love passionate communities (back story [here](#)) and if Monday's [live hangout](#) was any indication, we've got one. Of course, all you need to do is look at the Slack and you'll see the energy.

I've been contacted by at least 50 people offering opinions, suggestions, and a willingness to help out in a variety of ways.

Bottom line: people want IOTA to succeed and the size/strength of this community is, in my opinion, the single biggest asset we possess. The key will be to leverage it effectively and align people to their passions and interests while pushing IOTA forward in a concerted way.

## 2. The High-Level Vision

We have a world-class, unique, and differentiated vision for the technology that is going to empower the decentralized future. NO ONE has anything close to Tangle. You know that and we need to build off of that. We also have many angles we can work off of...no fees, no blockchain bloat, much less energy wasted...that's huge. It's almost an embarrassment of riches.

## 3. Brand Awareness

In the crypto space (which is a good start), everyone knows IOTA. Beyond that, there's limited awareness. This isn't uncommon. Aside from Bitcoin, nothing (and that includes ETH) has wide mainstream awareness. A strong start.

## 4. Commitment to execution

Judging by how quickly the core team responded to the vulnerabilities exposed by the MIT team last month (we can ignore the whole fiasco of her timing in publication--for now) and how the recent attack on the [IOTA network was promptly handled](#), I think you can feel good about responsiveness to market needs and the commitment to the vision.

### **Medium: Where is some “low-hanging fruit” that can be a strength**

#### 1. Brand Perception

Staying contained within the crypto space for this analysis, I'll say that perception is mixed. Even within the community.

Brand is about much more how something looks. It's about how it “feels” and the feeling is what comes from the sum of an individual's interactions with a “brand” across anyone of its touchpoints.

Now, what makes a brand in a decentralized project is probably a deeper conversation for another time, but certainly the website, GitHub, the experience of using the wallet, the token availability/liquidity, and core developers fall into that category. In addition, does the larger story of IOTA's vision resonate with people outside of the community?

To all of this, I say we have a mixed brand perception. People LOVE the vision (as discussed) and think it's unique/differentiated (which is mega-important and, frankly,

it's where most brands really suffer).

At the same time, the perception of the brand is impacted by the fact that many people feel that the wallet isn't easy enough/intuitive enough, the singular listing on Bitfinex is limiting, the website is not organized enough for some people, and the belief that sometimes our core devs behave in a way that makes people feel uncomfortable.

I've spoken at length with David and love his passion. I've never met the others in person and I don't want to speak for them or tell them (or anyone) what to do.

All I can is what I am observing based on the data I've gathered and that is the *perception* that sometimes the core dev team hurts the IOTA cause.

Now, to be clear, I'm not here to admonish anyone. Nor am I here to take anything away from what has been accomplished so far. Being in the top 10 of all cryptocurrencies is, by definition, something that most people have not done and, frankly, almost no one could do. It's a remarkable achievement.

When people look at decentralized projects, they look at 4 things (I believe)

- a. Token design- does it make sense and have the possibility of circular economic network effects?
- b. Technology-- is it unique and well put together/architected and coded?
- c. Team- can the core team execute?
- d. Community- is there a large group of people who support it, invest it, and *build on top of it*?

I'd be lying if I said there were no concerns about the team...at the present time...and that impacts brand perception.

We need to figure out a way to empower the team to be authentic and, at the same time, be leaders of a movement that is larger than themselves. It's not easy and it's going to be a team effort.

### **Weaknesses: What long-term things require focus and sustained effort?**

#### **1. Messaging**

We all need clarity about how we talk about IOTA so that, within reason, our story is consistent in the marketplace and the high-level vision resonates with our key audiences (which we need to define, but includes enterprises, developers, investors, and core believers).

There are 100 different ways we could go with this, but we can't have too much fragmentation. We want to empower the community to be able to innovate where they

see opportunity, but it's like an orchestra. We want a song sheet (this is the core value proposition) based on our "[WHY?](#)" (see [Simon Sinek](#)) that enables a massive transformative purpose---what Big Hairy Audacious Goal are we shooting for?

A couple of action items here are to create/refine

- a. An IOTA manifesto
- b. A messaging platform
- c. A brand platform (this is the 'genesis block' of our marketing) and represents what we stand for, our core values, etc.

The challenge here is that each one of us has our own reason for being passionate about IOTA and, in my experience, it's a truism that "you can't please all the people all the time." I guess that's why projects fork, right?

But hopefully, we can find something that resonates with almost all of you. For example, I personally love the environmental aspect of how consensus is achieved without huge expenditures of electricity. I also love the no-fees part. But other people may like other elements.

We need to try and find a way to cover the most important elements, give people enough latitude, but not have chaos/mayhem...if we are going to successfully drive into the mainstream.

The good news is that we have Anand, who is world-class on this so I feel confident.

## 2. Communication

There is SO much goodness going on with IOTA and so many ideas. The question is...how do you keep people informed about what's going on?

If we launch a new partnership, should it go on the blog, Slack, YouTube, Twitter...all of them? The more you know as a community member, the more you can help the cause...but if you live on Slack and all announcements are on the blog (just an example), you are going to feel left out. That's not good for morale or for the mission. I don't have the answer for this right now.

We also need more regular contact between the core team and the community as well as ways for people to participate virtually in IOTA activities happening world-wide.

## 3. Infrastructure

We need to create a flexible, dynamic infrastructure to enable the community to spend more time "out there" and less time "in here" trying to figure out what's going on. Yes, you want to connect with everyone, but at our core, we want to give IOTA community

members the tools they need to help IOTA grow.

So, one example, is an initiative that [@Kev is working on for “field evangelists.”](#) (I know not everyone loves that term, but we’ll go with it for now).

Imagine you want to put on an event (or just host a meet-up in your city). That would be great!

But wouldn’t it be greater IF you had a recipe to follow? Such as, “ok,

- a. Here are the logos
- b. Use meetup.com or facebook or eventbrite or whatever
- c. Here’s the most recent “About IOTA” paragraph you can use
- d. Here are some powerpoint (sorry, I’m ex-MSFT) slides you can use that give the overview
- e. Here’s the best 3 videos you could show
- f. Here’s why IOTA is better than x, y, and z
- g. Etc.

Now, imagine going into that event armed with those types of things? You’d be unstoppable. We need all of that and Kevin has graciously agreed to lead the charge, but as you can see, it’s going to take a lot of work.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you want to drive IOTA forward, [join the IOTA Community Marketing Team. Fill out this form.](#)

We need more Kevins, Winstons, Lauris, Jameses, Jasons, and Hanses. Thank you in advance

### **What are we going to attack first?**

Here are just some of the items.

1. PR list of everyone who has ever covered/written about IOTA with email and Twitter
2. Influencer list of (almost) every blogger who has ever covered/written about IOTA

3. A Marketing GitHub-equivalent (where you can get logos, slides, font guidelines, 1 pagers, etc.)
4. A group of “thought leadership” content creators who can take our core messages and educate desired audiences about IOTA in a non-threatening/helpful way
5. A decentralized marketing budget so that proposals like the IOTA treasure hunt can be funded seamlessly (if it makes sense, this isn’t an endorsement) and where accountability is provided so that people just don’t game the system. But my goal is to push as much marketing activity innovation out to the edges of the network as possible.
6. We need a wiki of “Top User Generated Content” (greatest hits) that we could up vote (like Reddit or Steemit or something like that), because there are some GREAT videos and I’d love to have the community be the crowd-sourced mechanism for the best content to help others onboard. For example, [this “Wallet set up tutorial”](#) is great.
7. We need a way to align the passion and abilities of community members with the tasks that IOTA requires to get done (the IOTA Evangelist Network is a micro-example of this)

### **What do you think?**

Ok, this is enough for starters.

Again, the community here is amazing. The passion of our core team is phenomenal. The vision is unique and differentiated. Most of all, the world needs what IOTA has to offer.

The fact that we have a lot of stuff to fix isn’t a bad thing, it’s a GREAT thing.

Just one day at a time.

Ok, comment away.

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