

# ***Got Ideas?***

***. . . unleash your creativity  
and make more money!***



## **Creative Marketing Solutions to Jump-Start Your Business**

Learn how to access your creativity  
for out-of-the-ordinary, results-driven  
marketing solutions that already exist inside you.

By Michele Pariza Wacek  
Creative Concepts and Copywriting LLC

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about the author  
**Michele Pariza Wacek**

Michele started writing professionally in 1993 and launched Creative Concepts and Copywriting LLC in 1998. Before deciding to work for herself, she had garnered experience from all sides of the marketing world – as creative services coordinator of an international company, as a writer in marketing agencies and as a communicator in city government.

Going into business for herself was the best thing she ever did. She has discovered a passion for combining her creativity with her writing ability in order to help solve marketing problems for her clients. And that passion has led to a client list as diverse as the problems she helps solve, including:

- The successful opening of several charter schools, retail businesses and a community bank
- Launching an online wedding resource guide
- Putting together all marketing tools for a high-technology start-up company
- Writing winning entries for award contests
- Crafting successful fund-raising letters

Michele's articles are quickly spreading throughout the Web. She is a featured columnist for several Web sites and newsletters (both print and e-mail), including Creativity-Portal.com and Aspire2Write.com and has been featured on other expert sites like sideroad.com.

As for education, she holds a double major – English and communications – from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has completed coursework toward a masters in Agricultural Journalism, also at UW-Madison.

Michele lives in the mountains of Prescott, Arizona, with her husband Paul and three border collies—Roxy, Maddie and Nick.



Katie Baird, Loose Ends

## *Table of Contents*

1	Why This Book?.....	5
2.	Marketing Basics .....	16
3.	Creativity Basics.....	22
4.	Create Your Marketing Opportunities .....	28
5.	Your Business Basics.....	36
	The Benefits of Your Business.....	36
	Your Target Market.....	40
	Dragon Background Sheet .....	49
	Centaur Critique Sheet.....	54
6.	Your Brand.....	56
7.	Your Marketing Medium – Advertising.....	60
	Print .....	62
	Radio.....	67
	Television .....	73
	Direct Mail .....	79
	Brochures/Other Print Collateral.....	84
	Web Sites.....	89
	Online/Email Campaigns .....	94
	Premiums .....	100
8.	Your Marketing Medium – Public Relations.....	105
9.	Your Marketing Medium – Community Relations.....	110
10.	Your Marketing Medium – Promotions/Events .....	115
11.	Your Marketing Medium – Customer Relations .....	121
12.	Putting It All Together .....	125
13.	Other Ways To Use CYMO.....	129
14.	What To Do When It Doesn't Work.....	134
15.	A Few Parting Words.....	136
	Appendix A: Sphinx Questions.....	137
	Appendix B: Hippogriff Creative Exercises.....	1140
	Appendix C: Creative Nurturing Techniques.....	149
	Appendix D: Resources .....	151
	Appendix E: Creativity Tools .....	155

## ***Chapter 1 – Why This Book?***

The owner of a small bed and breakfast called me one day wanting some marketing consultation. I drove out to meet her.

The B&B was tucked away off the beaten path, nestled on its own piece of desert paradise. Constructed to resemble a Victorian mansion, it stood against a backdrop of mountains, pine trees and wild sage. Hiking trails crisscrossed the property, meandering down a wash blanketed with waving grasses and black-eyed susans. A family of quail hurried along the path while hummingbirds alternated between zooming and hovering. The rooms were oversized and tastefully decorated, furnished with their own fireplace and whirlpool tub.

As we toured the facility, I asked my standard questions. What sets your business apart from the competition? What are your business problems? Who is your target market? What kind of marketing have you been doing?

"Business isn't great," the owner told me. "We've been in business for two years and we're having trouble booking rooms."

I had noticed we were the only two people in the place. "So, what have you been doing to get people in here?"

She listed a couple of things she had tried. "But to be honest, we've gotten the best response from a direct mail coupon service."

"A coupon service?" I repeated, dumbfounded. I didn't think I had heard her right.

"Yes, a coupon service," she repeated firmly.

In case you aren't familiar with direct mail coupon services, here's how they typically work: Each month the company sends out an envelope stuffed with coupons to every single address in a certain geographical area.

Now, before I go any further, I want to say there's nothing wrong with this marketing technique. For certain businesses and certain campaigns this can be extremely effective because they reach a very specific target market.

Yes, the coupons go to everyone under the sun.

But not everyone looks at them.

People who like cutting coupons and shopping around for the best bargains are most likely to open the envelope. They're also the most likely to use the coupons inside. But these are not people who will be loyal to you. Their allegiance lies with their pocketbook. If your price is the lowest, they'll be loyal to you. Once your competitor drops his price, they're off to your competitor.

That's why using price as a selling point is so dangerous. People don't see the value you bring other than the lowest price. To compete, you have to keep dropping your price. And I don't have to tell you what will eventually happen to your business if you keep that up.

Even worse, you can end up training all your customers, even the non-bargain-hunter ones, to only shop when there's a price promotion. Pretty soon, no one sees any other value except saving money. And if your competition comes up with a cheaper way of doing things, well, you're pretty much history.

I explained all of this to the owner. Her face lit up when I got to the part of training your customers. "That's already happening," she exclaimed. "I have people calling me and demanding a coupon or they won't stay here."

Two years in business and this beautiful B&B that could easily have branded itself as a romantic getaway for upscale couples had instead attracted a base of customers who would only stay if the price was right.

This was the moment when I realized I needed to write this book.

There are many good if not great marketing books out there. In fact, this owner had read many of them. These books are full of valuable information and ideas. But what this owner had not done, along with so many other business owners, authors and consultants and so on, was take the ideas and information and apply it to her specific business. She didn't own the marketing ideas – she was only borrowing them. And since she didn't take the time to figure out how to make them work for her, her business was suffering.

That's what's different about this book. I teach you how to take those marketing principles and actually apply them to what you want to sell. And I take it one step further – I also teach you how to use creativity exercises and principles to make your marketing stand out from anything else that's out there. I call this process Create Your Marketing Opportunities (or CYMO).

Marketing is such a vast field, and especially now with things changing so rapidly, it's difficult for one book to cover everything. That's why I consider my book a companion to other marketing books and programs. Remember, what I'm teaching is a process – I'm not trying to cover every single marketing principle. Not only would that make this book too long, but why reinvent the wheel when there are so many other good programs out there? The beauty of this book is you can take the CYMO process and apply it to other marketing ideas and principles you find in other places – and make your sales explode.

## ***Why be creative?***

Marketing is going through a revolution right now. The old ways of marketing are dying. And a new regime is coming of age.

To understand how marketing is changing, it's important to start with a bit of history. The image most of us have of marketing is based on an old communications model, one that was popular in, say, the 1970s. That was when we had three television broadcast networks (ABC, CBS and NBC – no FOX neither) a public television channel, one newspaper and a handful of magazines and radio stations. Trade magazines and newsletters were few and far between, we had no Internet and no e-mail.

Because consumers had so few choices, it was fairly easy to market to them. Chances were pretty good they were watching, reading or listening to one of a handful of mass media sources.

In fact, to be successful in this marketing model, all you really needed was money.

Here's how it worked. A business created a good product. The business hired an advertising agency. The agency spent thousands of dollars placing ads on the three network television stations and national magazines.

Perhaps it also bought a few spots on local radio stations and newspapers. And if the ad budget was big enough, success was practically guaranteed.

There was no mystery to marketing. Mostly it was a numbers game. Spend the money and get a return.

Businesses were selling products. Mass media businesses were selling advertising space. Advertising agencies were buying space. Everyone was making money. And everyone was happy.

Fast forward to 2004. Now, instead of three television channels we have hundreds. Instead of a handful of magazines we have dozens, including about a million trade publications. On top of that, we have the Internet and e-mail just begging for a piece of our time.

Never before in the history of communications have audiences been so fragmented. Just locating your customers has turned into that old adage of finding a needle in a haystack. But that's not the only challenge – even if you do find your customers there's no guarantee they'll listen to you.

Wherever we go, we are confronted by marketing message after marketing message. It's been estimated that we're bombarded with over 3,000 messages a day . . . and that number keeps going up. How have we responded? By learning to shut most of those messages out (which of course makes it even harder for marketers to get us to act upon their message).

But the woes of the traditional marketing model don't end there. The Internet has also introduced a little thing called accountability.

When you market online, you can track what people are looking at and, even more importantly, where you lost them in selling process. For instance, you can check your Web site stats and see which pages people used to enter your site and which pages made them leave. You can track what people clicked on in your e-mail campaign or if they even opened it.

With traditional or offline marketing, it's much harder to know what's going on. You can track a customer buying something or not buying something, but that's about the extent of it. Sure you can have customers bring in a coupon or tell you they heard something on the radio, which helps some, but what about the people who didn't come in. Was it because they weren't persuaded by the ad or because they didn't even know about it? Or did they simply lose the coupon? Traditional advertising doesn't have the answers either.

So, if the traditional marketing model is dying, what's going to replace it?

### **Innovation.**

Marketing guru Seth Godin, who wrote *Permission Marketing*, *Purple Cow*, and other marketing books, elaborates on this theme. In *Permission Marketing*, he describes how marketing is changing from traditional, or what he calls interruption marketing, to permission marketing.

Interruption marketing works by interrupting you. Nobody watches television for the commercials. Nobody flips through a magazine for the ads. But that's how interruption marketing gets you to look at their marketing.

Permission marketing is completely different. With permission marketing, customers look forward to hearing from you. They like receiving information from you because you're providing them with something they want. So they've agreed to enter into a relationship with you. And if permission marketing is done correctly, you'll eventually develop a stronger relationship with your customers than you ever would have with interruption marketing. (But that doesn't mean interruption marketing doesn't have its place. You still need to interrupt people so they can give you permission in the first place.)

In *Purple Cow*, Godin explains that the plain old, one-size-fits-all vanilla product has also gone the way of the dinosaurs. There is no longer a market for the mass-produced products. We don't need another Tide laundry detergent or Charmin toilet paper. We already have those products, and moreover we already trust those brands. New products need to be unique, sleek and appeal to a very specific target market.

The same principles of new products also apply to marketing. The same old marketing concepts just ain't going to cut it anymore. You need to take advantage of every opportunity you can. **And that includes your creativity.**

*Still not convinced? Here are two reprints that should help.*

To further prove why your marketing needs a shot of creativity, I've reprinted two pdfs from my Web site here: [Seven Reasons Why You Absolutely Must Get Creative With Your Marketing RIGHT NOW](#) and [Six Ways Your Creativity Can Turbocharge Your Copywriting](#).

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### ***Seven reasons why you absolutely must get creative with your marketing RIGHT NOW***

#### **1. It's not your grandfather's communications model.**

Communications has drastically changed since, say, the 1970s when marketing was in its heyday (actually most of the 1900s, but the 1970s is a good representative year). Target markets are fragmented, customers have more demands on their time and they've learned to shut out the majority of marketing messages out there. The old ways of marketing don't work the way they used to. To succeed in the new communications model, you need every advantage you can find. And that includes harnessing your creativity.

#### **2. Break through the information/products overload.**

The Internet has been the biggest boom to small businesses everywhere. It's simple and affordable to sell your products and/or services to anyone in the world. However, the ease of setting up an Internet business means lots of people are doing it. Lots of people doing it means lots of products and services are available.

The easiest way to set yourself apart from the other 16 million Web sites out there is to enlist the help of your creativity.

#### **3. If it looks like your competitor's marketing plan...**

While it's always good to know where your competitors are putting their marketing dollars, it may not be smart to be there too. (What I'm referring to are the different marketing vehicles, such as print publications, radio stations, billboards, event sponsorships, community groups, etc.) This is especially a problem if you're always following your competitors' lead and are never "the first" to take advantage of a new opportunity.

Think of it this way: If your message is only appearing in the same places as your competitors, how are you going to keep from blending into the crowd?

I'm not saying to ignore the places where your competitors are hanging out. I'm just saying you had better get creative with your marketing vehicles. Maybe you need a token presence on some media outlets while you branch out and look for other "off the beaten track" opportunities you can own.

#### **4. If it smells like your competitor's marketing message...**

Producing similar marketing materials to your competitors is a surefire way to get your customers to ignore you. Take cars for instance. Can you tell me the difference between a Ford and Chevrolet commercial (other than the tagline)? Do you even know if the commercial you're remembering IS a Ford or Chevy commercial?

See what I mean?

And when your customers can't remember what's different between you and your competitor, how will you convince them to buy from you rather than your competitor? Getting creative with your marketing will help your message stand out from the crowd.

#### **5. Harness the power of your creativity for your marketing.**

Not only is there power in using your creativity, but there's power in new ideas. Skeptical? Think of the surge of energy you feel during that "A-ha" moment. Think of all the excitement surrounding a new idea. You can even take it further and look at the energy surrounding the creation of a new life (which, when you get right down to it, is the ultimate act of creation). When you focus that power on your marketing, there's no telling how far it will take you.

#### **6. Enjoy your marketing.**

Let's face it. Marketing isn't always fun. In fact, sometimes it's drudgery. But when you add your creativity to the mix, your marketing takes on something completely different.

Being creative is fun. So, the more you can blend your creativity with your marketing, the more fun you'll have with your marketing. And the more fun you have, the more you'll do it (and the more results you'll see).

#### **7. Use it or lose it, baby.**

The more you use your creativity, the more creative you become and the more your creativity will spill over in other parts of your life. What better way to consistently make use of your creativity than by making it a part of your marketing plan?

The bottom line? No matter where you are on the creativity scale, your attempts at creativity won't hurt your marketing (no matter how "bad" you think you are at it). But if you don't at least try to be creative, you're definitely never going to stand out

from the crowd. And, chances are, being creative will only enhance your marketing – probably in new and unexpected ways.

That's the beauty of creativity – you never know when or how it will step through the door, bringing with it all the energy and excitement of new adventures.

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## ***Six ways your creativity can turbocharge your copywriting***

### **1. A different voice will set you apart.**

In a cyber-world filled with more than 16 million Web sites, one of the most effective ways to make yourself stand out is through words. If you have a different or unique way of stringing words together, you WILL stand out from the crowd. And isn't that what you're trying to do?

There's a lot of talk about "voice" in writing circles. It's one of those things that's easy to recognize and tough to teach. However, I CAN tell you that the more in touch you are with your creativity, the easier it will be to develop a distinct voice.

### **2. Putting your personality in your writing is worth its weight in gold.**

Even more than a different voice, work on allowing your personality to shine through your writing. If people like your writing style or voice, chances are, they'll like you. And if they like you, they'll probably become your customers (or they may tell other people about you, and those people may become your customers). Again, your creativity is your best friend here. Let it help you.

### **3. A picture is worth a thousand words (even if you use words to paint the picture).**

If you can describe your products or services in such a way that it forms images in your customers' heads, well, then you've just created something that will last long after the marketing is over. Words are powerful. Why else do novels stay with us for so long? Those "pictures" we see draw us into the world of the novel, and those pictures stay with us long after we've closed the book. If you can create that kind of staying power with your marketing materials, think about how much ahead of your competition you'll be.

Painting pictures requires more than just creativity. But it's a good start. Try thinking about different ways you can describe your products and services so they're more likely to stay with your customers.

### **4. Create an experience your customers won't forget.**

Like painting pictures, you can also create an entire experience using words. Again, the more "real" your marketing materials are to your target market, the more your

business will stay with your customers.

A big push with branding has been creating an experience. Starbucks has done it. So has Nike. Both of them have created their “brand experience” using more than words, but words are certainly one of the cheaper ways you can do it. Think of using your senses when you do this – how does your product smell? Taste? Feel? (Creativity definitely helps here.) What will your customers experience when they use your products or services? What experience do you want them to have? How can you extend that experience to your marketing materials so they get a "taste" of what your products or services will give them?

**5. Approach your marketing materials from a different angle.**

One of the reasons creative people are creative is they're able to look at ideas differently from other people. And, the last thing you want is your marketing materials to sound like everyone else's. Let your creativity help you create a new, fresh angle for your marketing materials

**6. Connect with your target market.**

How do you make a sale? You connect emotionally with your target market. How do you do that? By putting yourself in their shoes. You show them how your products or services are something they need and want. And they feel like you understand them. Again, your creativity can help you here. It can help you envision your target market while you write to them, choosing the words and phrases that will speak directly to them, and helping you empathize with them.

The bottom line? No matter where you are on the creativity scale, your attempts at creativity won't hurt your copywriting (no matter how "bad" you think you are at it). But if you don't at least try to be creative, you're definitely never going to stand out from the crowd. And, chances are, being creative will only enhance your copywriting – probably in new and unexpected ways.

That's the beauty of creativity – you never know when or how it will step through the door, bringing with it all the energy and excitement of new adventures.

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### ***Who is this book for?***

If you want to apply proven marketing principles to your unique business and develop your own unique marketing plan, then this book is for you.

If you want to know how to make marketing an extension of your creativity projects, then this book is for you.

If you want your marketing to be effective, to grow your business and sell your products or services, then this book is for you.

If you want your marketing to be fun, then this book is for you.

Other people who would find this book valuable include creative professionals such as marketing managers, advertising reps, marketing consultants, public relations consultants, copywriters and graphic designers. Not only can they use the principles for their own business, but they can also use it as a blueprint to help their clients.

And if you're an artist, writer or novelist who longs to get your art out there but hate the drudgery of doing it yourself, then this book is also for you.

### ***How do you use this book?***

You'll notice this book is in workbook form. Why? So you will USE it.

It's not enough to simply read this book from start to finish. In order to get the full benefits of this book, you should print it out and work on the exercises as you go along. Yes, I mean you should grab a pen and actually write in the spaces provided. And if I didn't provide enough space for you to complete your thoughts, then find some extra paper and scribble on that.

Your creativity is the most powerful tool in your arsenal (Yes, I do mean that. I don't care how uncreative you think you are right now. Trust me, you are creative and your creativity can take you and your business to heights you've never imagined. If you're still struggling, make sure you take special note of the next section "But I'm not creative.") However, just reading this book isn't going to make you more creative nor will it make your marketing more creative. And just reading this book won't help you integrate essential marketing principles into your own business. You need to work through the exercises to accomplish all that.

In addition, I've included some creativity nurturing exercises in the appendix to help you continue your creative journey if you so desire.

The best part of CYMO is its flexibility. You can use it at any stage of the marketing process. For instance, you can use it:

- While putting together a marketing plan.
- While figuring out what marketing techniques will and won't work for your business.
- While brainstorming actual marketing campaigns, such as headlines for print ads or article ideas for your newsletter.
- While pinpointing why your marketing campaign just isn't working.

Not only will you find yourself coming up with new ideas as you work through the book, but by the time you finish it, you'll know exactly where to start with your marketing. And this might not be the same place someone else begins (in fact, it probably won't) because it will be unique to your business and goals.

### ***"But I'm not creative. How will this book help me?"***

For many people, embracing their creativity means taking on a lot of baggage they wish the airlines had lost long ago. To them, creativity is a volatile word, full of dark, painful emotions. They feel they aren't creative, or they can't be creative, or if they become creative all sorts of nasty things will happen.

Trust me, none of that has to be true.

In Appendix C, I provide ideas and resources for making friends with your creativity. *The Artist Way* by Julia Cameron is also an excellent book to help you and creativity heal.

However, even if you don't think you are the slightest bit creative, this book will still work for you. Why? Because CYMO is more than just a way to integrate your creativity with marketing principles. The process also helps you "own" any marketing ideas you come across. You'll be able to better judge what marketing ideas will or won't work with your business.

And you may just find yourself coming up with creative ideas after all.

If it makes it easier for you, think of CYMO as a way to develop "outside-the-box" marketing solutions or "out-of-the-ordinary" marketing concepts. Don't think of it as creative marketing if that's just too difficult to wrap your mind around. I don't want semantics getting in the way of you benefiting from CYMO.

I hope that right about now, you're very excited and ready to transform your marketing. You may even have your pen out and are ready to work through the exercises.

Hold on a second.

Before we get to the actual process, I need to set the stage and explain the theory behind it and define some terminology. Otherwise CYMO is not going to make a heck of a lot of sense to you. You need to have a basic grasp of marketing principles and creativity principles to understand how I've married the two.

This is how I've laid out the rest of the book:

Chapter 2 provides you with a foundation of marketing principles.

Chapter 3 provides you with a foundation of creativity principles.

Chapter 4 lays out the CYMO process and explains each section in detail.

Chapter 5 is where you get to pull out the pen. This is the chapter where you start gathering background information on your business that you'll be using for the rest of the book. By completing these questions, you'll develop a much stronger understanding of your business and what you need to do to market it effectively.

Chapter 6 is where you put the CYMO process in action. Each chapter and section shows you how to use CYMO with specific marketing principles.

The final chapters explore how to put all these ideas together, other uses for the CYMO process and what to do when things don't work. The Appendices are full of other marketing and creativity resources.

Okay, so now that you see where I'm going let's get started with some basic marketing information.

## ***Chapter 2 – Marketing Basics***

In this chapter, you'll gain a foundation of marketing and learn key marketing terms including:

- Marketing
- Advertising
- Public relations
- Promotions
- Community relations
- Customer relations
- Target market
- Benefits
- Marketing message
- Frequency
- Branding

No writing yet – this is a theory chapter.

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We'll start with a few basics, beginning with some terminology. However, keep in mind these are my definitions I created to make understanding this book easier. Other people may have different definitions. That's fine. I just want to provide a starting point for everyone.

### ***What is marketing?***

When most people think of marketing, they think of advertising. But while advertising is a part of marketing, there's more to marketing than advertising. Advertising is simply one piece of the marketing puzzle.

So a better way to think about marketing is anything you do that touches either your customers or potential customers.

Yes, I do mean anything. Whether it's sending an invoice, handling a complaint call, running a radio ad or sending an e-mail, you're marketing your business if you're touching a customer or a potential customer.

That said, let's talk about ways to use marketing to increase business and get new customers. I feel most marketing practices can be grouped in these five categories.

- **Advertising**
- **Public relations**
- **Promotions**
- **Community relations**
- **Customer relations**

**Advertising** is anything paid for and thus controlled by the business. You pay money for your words and/or graphics to be run your way. This includes: print ads (newspapers and magazines), radio, television and online (banner and other ads). I would also include direct mail and other marketing pieces, such as brochures, flyers, Web sites, business cards, in-store displays, point-of-purchase, etc.

**Public relations** is getting stories and information about your company, your employees, you or your partners or your products and services into the media. (I include print media, online media, radio and television in this.) You don't pay the media to publish these articles or information. However, you may pay someone to discover an angle, write a press release, pitch the story, etc.

**Promotions** are any kind of event where you meet people face-to-face. I include in this open houses, trade shows, parties, expos, and other events. Also, if you do any public speaking or host seminars, I would consider this in the promotional category as well.

**Community relations** is when you and your business become involved in your community. For instance:

- Your business donates money to nonprofit organizations
- You or your employees volunteer at a fundraising event
- You or your employees volunteer for a nonprofit organization
- You or your employees join a service club
- You or your employees network and/or volunteer at industry association meetings or business functions (such as Chamber of Commerce events).

**Customer relations** is any program where you build or strengthen a relationship with a past, present or potential customer. I include in this referral programs, newsletters, e-newsletters/e-zines, holiday gifts, etc. (Note: This also includes how both you and your employees treat your customers or potential customers.)

It takes far less money and effort to keep an existing customer than to attract a new one, so customer relations should always be a strong part of every business.

Ideally, a good marketing program should include a mixture of all five components. How much depends on what you're trying to accomplish. We'll get to that later in the program.

Also, marketing (like life) doesn't exist in a vacuum. There's some overlap between the vehicles...and there should be. For instance, you get an article published in a prominent trade publication, which is under PR. Why not reprint the article (or a version of it depending on what rights you sold) in your newsletter (customer relations) post it on your Web site (advertising) and submit it to other online portals (online). You can also send a copy with a handwritten note to potential customers (customer relations) and have it be a part of your press kit to garner more press in other publications (another PR strategy). See how everything interconnects?

The more you can reuse your marketing, the more successful your marketing will be. Part of the CYMO process is to help you see all the possibilities in your marketing campaign.

Okay, so now that you have an idea of what marketing is, let's move to the foundation of building your own unique marketing program. To start you need to know WHO you're trying to reach, WHY they want to do business with you and WHAT you're selling them.

### ***The WHO – Target Market***

These are the people who want to buy your products or services. And yes, you can have more than one target market. Just make sure you understand who they are and why they're buying your product or service.

You can find your target market one of two ways. Either locate the target market you want to work with and develop products and services that market wants. Or create the products or services then hunt down the target market who wants them. Either way works, each just has a different strategy. We'll look at ways of defining your target market or markets in the next chapter.

Remember, people don't buy products, they buy what the product will give them. In other words, they want to know "what's in it for me?"

### ***The WHY – Benefits***

The hard truth is that people don't care about businesses (and that includes your business). What they care about is how your business's products and services can solve THEIR problems, meet THEIR needs and make THEIR lives easier.

That's why answering the "What's in it for me?" question is so powerful.

People buy a product or a service because it does something for them. What people don't buy is a list of descriptions about a product or service.

Take saving money. People like saving money. (There's a reason why businesses have sales.) Saving money is a benefit. But dig deeper and you'll discover huge variations in the "why" people save money. Some people need to save money because they have tight budgets and if they don't shave spending in one place, they'll have to do without certain things. Some people save money because they enjoy the feeling they get when they save. For instance, they like feeling they haven't overspent, been taken advantage of, are great bargain hunters or have gotten away with something. Those are the benefits of saving money.

### ***The WHAT – Marketing message***

Now that you know who you're talking to and what motivates them to buy, you gotta let them know what you're selling. This is your marketing message.

In a nutshell, your marketing message tells your target market who you are, what you want them to do, why they should do it (what's in it for them if they purchase what you're selling) and the value you bring to the table.

Your message can be found in all sorts of things. Advertisements certainly, but also press releases, articles, events, newsletters, speeches, etc. Basically the marketing vehicle of your choice should have a message to it.

For advertisement, your marketing message should not be confused with your call to action. Call to action is that line in an ad where you actually tell your customers what to do. ("Hurry in." "Sign up now." "Log on now.") But before you get to the call to action, the rest of the ad should have done its job by getting the customer's attention, encouraging her to read more and finally, acting upon your message.

Now that we've discussed the who, why and what of marketing, there are still a couple of other key marketing concepts we need to cover – frequency, brand and testing.

### ***Frequency***

I'll sum it up in three words: Frequency is king.

The more often you can get your name in front of your potential and current customers, the more likely you'll make a sale.

Depending on what study you want to believe, people need to see your message anywhere from three to 27 times before they act upon it. And, if you want to brand your

business, then you need to get it in front of your customers as often as possible. How do you think Ivory Soap, Campbell Soup and Tide all embedded their brands so deeply into our minds? Through years and years of repeated advertising. That's why those brands pop into our heads when we think about soap, soup or laundry detergent. So if you want to build your brand, then you need to have a system in place to get your name and your message in front of your target market repeatedly.

There's another benefit to frequent marketing. It also helps your current customers. People like to know they've made the right decision after they purchase something. How much reassurance they need depends on how much they've spent, but everyone needs some confirmation they made the right decision. Your marketing can help.

Studies have shown that people are more aware of car ads after they purchase a car—specifically car ads of the model they bought. And they're more likely to both believe and approve of the message. Again, because they want to know they made the right decision.

Reach is the other word you hear in marketing. Reach refers to how many different people you're reaching with your message. Reach can be expensive – buying one Super Bowl ad will undoubtedly get you a huge reach. But without the frequency, you're not going to see much response from that ad. (Now, if you could run that ad multiple times to that same group of people, you'd be getting somewhere. Of course the cost of that would add up in a hurry.)

If you have the choice between getting your message out one time to one hundred potential customers or getting your ad out five times to the same twenty customers each time, take the five times to the smaller audience. Reach is good. Frequency is better.

## ***Branding***

Branding is hot right now. Everyone in the business world is talking about it. And with good reason. A business' brand is tangible. A good brand can put money in the bank.

I suspect part of the reason why branding is so hot is because it's become more difficult to build. As I talked about in Chapter 1, it was easier in the good-old-days-before-the-Internet to build a brand. Now it's tougher. And because it's tougher, many businesses have become more focused on it.

So what is branding? Basically, it's the essence of your business. It's everything your business stands for, its purpose and why it even exists. This is conveyed in a number

of ways:

- Visually via consistent use of fonts, logo, colors and other images
- Through words (slogans, a writing style)
- Through an experience (think Starbucks)
- By reputation (think Martha Stewart).

It's your business' products and services and everything else a business is involved with all bundled up in one package.

As you can imagine, the topic of branding is much more complicated than I have room to discuss in this book. But take heart. There are plenty of excellent books and other resources on the topic to be found all over the Web. And, once you understand the creative process I'm teaching in this book, you can use that process with those other resources to develop your own unique and memorable brand. I'll give you some exercises to get you started in Chapter 5.

## ***Testing***

Testing has always been a component of marketing, but now with the Internet, testing has practically taken on a life of its own. In fact, many Internet marketing gurus out there claim testing is the number one secret to success.

I think the main reason why this has happened is because testing is just so darn easy on the Internet. Any Web site hosting company worth its salt will provide you with statistics so you can see what your customers are doing on your Web site. E-mails can be tracked as to open rate and click-through rate. (Click-through rates are when people click on a link in the body of the e-mail.) You can even track online ad click-through rates. With all this tracking, it's very easy to test your marketing campaigns.

But before you get to that part, you should spend some time testing your marketing ideas. That's why I've built testing into my process, so you can put your idea through an extra "test" before you actually launch the campaign.

Now that we've covered some marketing basics, let's take a look at some basic creativity concepts.