

Through The TransitSM

Free ideas and exercises from Marketing Hawks



Welcome to this month's issue of **Through the Transit**. Each month we focus on one side of the Transit Marketing lens: Brand, Package or People. This month's focus is:

B-R-A-N-D

October's Insight

Brand is your company identity. Remember, it's not your logo or your graphics. Brand is your company identity in the mind of the customer--and the employee. More than anyone else in a small business, the Chief Marketer is the guardian of the company brand.

The role of the Chief Marketer in a small business gets lonely. You're not part of a big corporate marketing team. Usually, you *are* the marketing team. Some of you are sole proprietors or juggle various roles in the small company you work for. None of you have the title "Chief Marketer" printed on your business card.

If you don't already consider yourself the Chief Marketer for your company, then start. It is a crucial role in any company, regardless of size. And a central part of your job is to develop and guard your brand. As Brand guardian you must wear multiple hats as brand cheerleader, brand visionary and brand cop. You can use your Achievers to help with all of these, but at the end of the day the final weight of the company's brand rests on your shoulders.

And it can be lonely. Many in your position simply give up on marketing. Or they surrender their company's marketing to the sales reps from the yellow pages, the newspaper, and TV or radio.

But championing your company's brand can also be very rewarding. It can supply you with a deep-down sense of self-satisfaction. Last month we discussed the fifth and highest stage of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: self-actualization. If you can enjoy the marketing tasks and feel like you are doing a good job, you can also feel better about yourself as a person from your contributions. But it doesn't stop there.

*Marketing Hawks*SM



Essential Marketing Vision for Small Business

Bringing out your own creativity as Chief Marketer is good for you and the company, but it's also good for your customers and employees. Solid marketing can help the whole company focus around the core brand values the company already possesses.

This month's exercise will help you tap into the creativity that awaits inside you.

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Create a Crystal Hour

Each human carries the vital spark of creativity inside. That includes you. But most companies tend to focus on turning their workers into efficient little task-machines. This is usually done in the name of cost-control, or efficiency, or multi-tasking, or one of a hundred other masks that stifle the brainpower of everyday people.

Don't buy into the myth that you aren't creative. It's a lie. Human = Creative. You may not be a skilled writer, or a graphic artist, or a wiz with spreadsheets. These are all skills that can be hired out. Imagination can't be.

What you need is the proper setting to let the creativity come out. You need an hour of insight. We call this the Crystal Hour.

All the other tasks you engage in as Chief Marketer are crucial, but sometimes a bit tedious. Gathering surveys, working with your Achievers, proofing ads--these are critical jobs, but can be a drag. The window that lets the wind of inspiration blow into us is the Crystal Hour.

Please build on the following basic suggestions as you pursue your own future study of the Crystal Hour. Remember, always develop and nurture what works best for *you*.

What to bring to your Crystal Hour session

- Current background material: meeting notes or customer surveys
- Other material; possibly from the Marketing Vault
- Notes you took from any sessions with Achievers
- Whatever you like to write on best: PDA, Spiral Notebook, Laptop, Big Chief Notebook, whatever. Just make sure it is comfortable.

Part One: The first 20 to 30 minutes

Acquire Solitude.

Solitude is a state of *mind* more than a location. You can plop down in the middle of a crowded coffee house or on a train or jet. Thousands of people can surround you. For many of us being one among hundreds re-energizes us.

Others need a special spot—a certain quiet room at home or a special place in their yard or on their balcony. For some the chatter of strangers siphons rather than strengthens their intuitive insight.

We do tend to stay a bit removed from friends and family. "Alone in a crowd", we aren't expected to engage others actively in conversation or play.

The idea is to draw on whatever environmental sources supply you with *energy*. Let the ideas flow freely. Many techniques exist already. Some people rearrange their notes into a ship-shape outline; others freefall, letting their ideas shake out from their mind and then jotting them down on paper. Others sketch or doodle as they let the ideas percolate just underneath consciousness. Some focus and concentrate intensely; while others practice some form of meditation or "mind-emptying" exercise.

It doesn't matter *how* you achieve the mind-frame that aligns you with your own creativity. Just find a way, and then get there.

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Create a Crystal Hour-Continued

Next, don't be afraid to let the ideas come. Refine later.

During the first twenty to thirty minutes of your Crystal Hour, permit the ideas and associations to flow in. Don't scrunch out ideas that seem too wacky. You can always "uncreate" a bad idea—your Achievers will be glad to help you with this. But it's completely impossible to lead a marketing department if your own idea bank has zero deposits.

Just let the ideas awaken out of yourself. And don't worry—at first-- where the ideas fit in the Transit Triangle. Just take twenty minutes of time devoted to birthing the *ideas* that you will use to help your company win. Let these ideas come up from your gut and your heart and your soul and your experience as a consumer.

Write down all the ideas—even the outlandish ones. Edit later.

Then, take a quick break. Five or ten minutes. Stretch, go to the bathroom, grab a coffee or tea, and walk about a bit. Free your mind for a few minutes.

Part Two: The Homestretch

You now have those ideas down on paper or PDA or computer. Next you need to arrange and sort your ideas. Two quick tips:

1. Use the Transit Concept. You've probably been doing this already, but if you haven't—there's no time like the present. Just draw arrows or jot notes when cross-referencing within the Brand-Package-People triangle. Another technique is to use different colored highlighters for the different sides of the Transit Triangle.

2. Pareto. Vilfredo Pareto was an Italian economist who discovered the 80/20 rule. When you Pareto a problem or situation, you mercilessly look for that 20% of the input that controls 80% of the output. You look for that 20% of the customers that supply 80% of the profits. You look at those 20% of products that are generating 80% of the profits.

Start to ask yourself what is most important. What 20% effort will give us 80% results? Of course, you need some immediate action steps to boost sales, but it's also important to supply vital "long-haul" insights you can graft onto the skeleton of your business.

The Wrap Up

A couple suggestions as you near the end of the Crystal Hour:

1. Quickly review your notes. Don't destroy them—not even the doodles. Gather the notes and scribbles and bits of paper and stick them in a file. The ideas that go into the discard pile during your first review may become worthwhile down the road.

2. Take just five minutes to relax. This part's for you, not for the company or the cause. How often do you get five minutes away from the kids or the class or the spouse or the company? Just take five, enjoy the rest of your drink and the sense of a job well done.

Imagination in the Chief Marketer is a secret weapon and a valuable asset. Unfortunately, most companies don't use it, but yours can.

Maslow, A. H. *A Theory of Human Motivation*

Published 1943

This month we again focus on this classic article. Here is a link to it:

<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm>

A brief recap of the 5 needs:

The Physiological Needs
The Safety Needs
The Love Needs
The Esteem Needs
The Need for Self-Actualization

Maslow indicates that most people have only a percentage of these needs filled at a certain time. On page 13, he points out that the average individual is most satisfied in the physiological and safety needs, and least satisfied in the self-actualization needs. Here is a clue to why it is important for us, as Chief Marketer, to do our best.

How many of us are in the career we planned to be in? Not many. Yet most of us who wind up in a position at our company where we are trusted with the marketing function possess some creativity. Coupled with this, we have a desire to advance our company, to promote it, to make it better and to make the company more profitable.

The problems of the Chief Marketer and the Sole Proprietor are similar. Both need to generate a certain kind of initiative and each must sometimes go-it-alone in the course of growing the business. Both need to be out front, cutting a new path for the rest of the company to follow. Both sometimes feel like they work in isolation, unappreciated.

When you start feeling bogged down, look to the last two needs: Esteem Needs and the Need for Self-Actualization. Both can give you a way out and a hand back up.

Esteem needs are often met through interaction with our fellows. If you get stuck or feel down, then seek out one of your business mentors or a peer in your company. Ask them to honestly review some of your work. Ask them to tell you where it lacks and where it is positive, then push forward. You can use your Achiever team for this esteem building, too. You'll be surprised how you suddenly don't feel as alone.

Last month we discussed that one key reason Achievers work well for your company is to fulfill an inner need—the need for self-actualization. This is true for you as Chief Marketer, as well. This is where a good Crystal Hour can really help. When we respond to our creativity we are responding to an inner calling; that voice inside that urges us to do our best, to use our creative ability for some good. We suddenly find ourselves re-energized and the road doesn't feel quite as lonely or difficult.