

BRANDING EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING PUBLIC RELATIONS
PRESENTATIONS HOW-TO VIDEOS TESTIMONIALS
INCENTIVES CASE STUDIES PAGE TAKEOVERS
SMART DEVICES DISCOVERY WEBSITES AD NETWORKS
EMAIL BLASTS DISCOVER WEBSITES AD NETWORKS
CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CALL-TO-ACTION
RESPONSIVE DESIGN EMAIL LETTERS SPONSORSHIPS
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SOFTWARE
OFF-PAGE SEO BLOGGING ROI COLLATERAL
EMAIL BLASTS DISCOVERY WEBSITES AD NETWORKS
GOOGLE LINKEDIN SLIDESHARE FACEBOOK
PRINT ONLINE SOCIAL DIRECT EMAIL KEYWORD
PROMOTIONS TRADE SHOWS WEBINARS
REDDIT DELICIOUS DIGG STUMBLEUPON
BLOGS PORTAL ENGAGEMENT GUERILLA MARKETING

"If you want to grow your business, you need to adopt
the strategies Bill outlines in this book."

DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT
Author of THE NEW RULES OF MARKETING AND PR

B2B A TO Z

Marketing tools and strategies
that generate leads for your
Business-to-Business company

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ISBN 978-0-9884977-0-2 (Paperback)

ISBN 978-0-9884977-1-9 (Hardcover)

ISBN 978-0-9884977-2-6 (eBook)

For Aya, Billy and Ashlyn

For my parents.

*Also dedicated to Jim Overend,
one of the best marketing men I've had
the honor of working with.*

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Introduction

I have a daughter. She has an uncommon name. Not unique, but uncommon. As a result, there is nothing harder than trying to find a cup, or pendant, or bracelet with her name on it. We search through custom product displays at specialty stores in hopes that some company somewhere would recognize that our daughter's name exists. So far we've come up empty handed – or have had to settle for items with a name similar to hers. *Justin? Emma? Will?* Sure, they are all represented well in the name-branded item category. They're the well-known names, like Apple, IBM and Amazon. There's always something made to identify with them.

How about you? Do you have a similar problem as it relates to your business research? Is your category unique but not uncommon? When you look for, say, a book on a subject that relates to it are you finding what you need—or are you settling for one that sounds similar but only really talks to Justin, Emma and Will?

You've probably picked up this book because you're a business person looking to learn more about business-to-business (B2B) marketing, an advertising or digital agency leader who wants to stay current with what's going on, a business owner looking to make more, or a digital strategist or B2B marketing manager trying to succeed better at what you do. You've probably also spent a good deal of time searching for books or guides that address your line or work – a business that sells to other businesses. Chances are you've had little luck finding them or, when you have, they've left you with very little to chew on. There really isn't that much out there for you, but I'm hoping to change that right here between these covers.

The truth of the matter is that B2B marketing has always been the Jan Brady to consumer marketing's Marcia. It has never received the respect (or attention) that consumer does; it's misunderstood by the masses (and sometimes, even by clients); and it has so few written resources to help its practitioners that it's only natural that companies are behind the curve on new developments in the field. The cry for help is understood: we simply want to know what to do, what to avoid, and what actually works. It's a difficult thing to do given that companies are as different as apples and oranges. Nonetheless, you would figure someone out there would be able to cull together enough universal truths about B2B marketing to create some type of "bible" on success in the industry.

Some of the changes in this industry have come so fast and hard that business heads are swimming. Social, mobile,

experiential...but it's not just new words every marketing manager and strategist needs to learn but their complex functions and how to manipulate them to actually affect a company's bottom line. It also doesn't help that most of the recent case studies of success, particularly in the social space, are usually documented about well-known institutional outfits that have gargantuan marketing budgets, like a Dell or a Cisco. While the success of a campaign that has included a well-placed series of expensive commercials (which you don't find in B2B) and a media blitz to rival Paris Hilton is nice for those companies, those success stories hardly matter to a company that sells shipping supplies, computer components, or food additives to partner companies that use them. They are a less-than-effective measure of how a manufacturer with a \$20,000 - \$800,000 marketing budget can spread that money out in all the places it's expected to hit.

I've been on the agency side of the marketing business for my entire career, and I've been involved in B2B for the last 12 years. My clients have included Canon, Capital One Bank, Showtime, JP Morgan Chase, Clear Channel, Department Of Veterans Affairs, Colgate-Palmolive, and many others, large and small. I've played my part in creating media for NBC Olympics, introducing new products to the market for Canon, Konica Minolta and Chase Small Business, and training startups on what's available to them and how to properly go to market with their products and services. I've developed wide-reaching campaigns and unique promotions with some of the best people in the industry and I've made the point of learning from them. I've been a Creative Director, Copywriter, Marketing Strategist, Digital Expert, Social Media Guru and New Business point person at different times in my career and, many times, all things at once. I've also been actively involved in the digital space since 1995, creating online

and interactive campaigns for clients since that time. The first social marketing campaign I worked on was developed in 2001, long before the term “social marketing” was part of the general vernacular. Even as a kid, I had a dad in the industry—an original “Mad Man” who held creative positions at McCann, Grey, and many others along the way.

When you’ve been in the trenches as long as I have, you learn pretty quickly what formulas and strategies lead to success and what to avoid. I’m happy to pass along these insights to you as well as some other successful B2B strategies that continue to reap dividends. (Having actual data that they’ve done so is also helpful, and I’ve got that, too). I also wanted to write a book that the reader can use as needed. Want to learn tools and strategies? There are chapters for that. Want to understand the B2B market better? Read those chapters first. Business books should work like good marketing materials – you should be able to learn what you need to learn without listening to the whole album first. And if you want to go from the first to the last page in that order it’s built for you, too.

In addition, my extended hope was to be honest and truthful with you about what you can expect from all this new noise. Just because someone tells you to start a blog doesn’t mean it’s right for your company. Just because it’s standard to pay for a Facebook page as part of a social marketing campaign doesn’t guarantee your customers will ever contact you through it. Just because you get your content out there to your audience doesn’t mean it will be read by them unless you do more to get eyes on it. None of this should discourage you, though. There are very effective ways to leverage your brand in the B2B marketplace and come out on top.

Will anyone in my industry be angry that I’m giving away the farm, opening up the curtain, or slaying a few sacred cows? I can’t see why. Ten years from now, there will be another

book describing all the new media channels that we can't even conceive of now. Everyone will be absorbing content through their sunglasses or some other new device. Strategies to get traffic through websites like SEO will be dramatically different because the programming language used to create these sites (if they are even called "sites" then) will be different. Some new form of media may crop up and blow all of our current media darlings out of the water. To quote Bill Murray from the movie "Meatballs": *"It just doesn't matter."* What does matter is sharing what is learned so others can take it and run with it. What does matter is letting marketers understand what is possible for their budgets despite what a bloated agency with million-dollar offices to maintain might be telling them. What does matter is that you, the marketing professional, get what you pay for, understand that not *everything* spent in an advertising budget is about ROI or should be, and that someone with the title "Director of Digital Strategy" isn't all that alien from you and your position.

So here it is, soup to nuts. B2B A to Z. To you from me.

Bill Blaney

CHAPTER 3:

The Advantage Most B2B Businesses Don't Know They Have

Take a good, hard look at banner ads or print in any trade website or magazine. Notice anything familiar? Most of the marketing you'll find there is completely and utterly forgettable. More than that, it's not even trying to be memorable. Now, notice the one or two ads that did manage to catch your attention? See a similarity between them? Chances are, they have a unique voice, a quick-to-read image that explains the service without words, and a clean, clutter-free look. You've just noticed the difference between effective ads and the other 99%.

A significant deal of advertising in the B2B space is unremarkable. It's boring. It is all about fitting as much informa-

tion, offers, and unnecessary graphics on a page as it can hold. And it doesn't do the job it's supposed to.

Now, grab a *Rolling Stone*, a *Wired* or a *Forbes*. Although there will also be forgettable ads in these magazines, there will probably be a few more that work. Ads in these publications, and their accompanying websites, are much more expensive to place. The weight of an ad's effectiveness is as important as the page it sits on. In some of the high-profile consumer websites and magazines, the fight for a viewer's attention is greater. Therefore, the preciseness of communicating effectively is crucial. Think of it like the water balloon game at the carnival. You have to be on target out of the gate, and steady throughout, in order to win.

When it comes to clever, smart, and memorable B2B campaigns, the percentages of home runs appear dramatically fewer than in consumer marketing. Much of this has to do with a mindset that suggests a business audience is not as receptive to a clever ad as consumer, and therefore, it's more effective being blunt, flat, and straightforward. Could that really be true—that the business audience has no sense of humor, no desire to be entertained, and little patience for anything other than concrete messages? I'm a human just like you are, and I'd give an equally flat no to that answer. People do wear their business hats when looking through trade channels, but the idea that the exclusion of emotion from a business campaign is the norm disregards even the simplest fact that there is no lack of emotion in the average workplace or life. Emotion—whether it's humor, excitement, or a tugging of the heart-strings—is a great starting point when conceiving your message. Using it effectively is the challenge.

Take a look at this campaign created for Mediaspace Solutions:



.....

**{ We'll take over your newspaper placement.
You take back your life. }**

Whether you're at a major ad agency, a Fortune 500 company, or a small direct response advertiser, it's easy to become a newspaper placement slave. Mediaspace Solutions frees your time (and your mind!) with sophisticated planning and placement, combined with highly experienced rate negotiating and absolute respect for deadlines. You get accurate, reliable outsourcing for any size newspaper buy, real people to work with, and very simplified billing - giving you back something that resembles a life.



For more information, please call 1-888-672-2100, or visit us on the web at www.mediaspacesolutions.com.



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Mediaspace Solutions, originally called Media Space Bank, is a media placement company that handles huge, multifaceted, Fortune 500 accounts for large agencies. It is responsible for placements of ads in hundreds of publications at any given time and in other forms of media as well.

We understood the purpose of what Mediaspace was selling and how and why it's used. We thought that the typical bullet-point-heavy advertising approach so many companies utilized for this kind of detailed service would be unacceptable for this company, particularly when the audience was readers of *Ad Age*, *Ad Week*, and *Media Week*. With some research, we were able to construct a detailed profile of Mediaspace's customer.

The company's average target were middle-management media buyers for large to medium-sized companies or advertising agencies. Their workloads were full, and nine times out of ten, these media buyers found themselves staying late at work managing large-volume placements that required countless calls, ad mechanical reviews, and micromanagement with their graphic production departments. They were stressed out and overwhelmed, and they wanted mostly to get home and see their wives and kids before everyone went to sleep.

That profile gave us what we came to know as the emotional underpinnings of our campaign: Media Space Bank gave customers a break. Although the distinct features of its products and services were important, this was the most powerful reason customers sought out Mediaspace, and it was the best way to explain to potential customers why MSB was built just for them.

We then went about creating a campaign that tapped into the customer's psyche, albeit with a bit of humor. The new company name we created also framed MSB as being that of a supportive "helper" rather than focusing on the specifics of

what the company did.

From its first placement, this campaign stood out from the clutter and got noticed. New customers, when they called Mediaspace Solutions, told the company how much they loved the new campaign. That was the company's return on investment. The fact of the matter is that this campaign succeeded not because it was unnecessarily bold. Not because it was racy or loud or different for the purpose of being different. It succeeded because it mixed a clear message that appealed directly to its customer's "need" while also catching their attention in an unexpected way. And that kind of dynamic is not solely the domain of consumer advertisers. B2B advertisers have every opportunity to produce the same type of surprising communication that Apple and Geico, among others, do. Thinking creatively is the first and most logical step. Unfortunately, many B2B advertisers are loath to take it.

B2B Advertising is Too Clichéd

It's said there are seven basic plots in literature that all stories derive from. If so, how can we call anything created today "original"? While the term "original" may always be in question, a better word to describe new work of every form is "fresh." In advertising, "fresh" is always the goal. A unique twist on an old idea is what most good advertising agencies strive for. Still, most of what passes for advertising these days is neither fresh nor original. Although there are few ideas for ads in this world that haven't been done in one form or another, audience's short-term memory is faulty. In that regard, coming up with something unique for your audience is not as tough as it might seem to be, and old ideas can have new life breathed into them with a little twist.

I mentioned my former boss George Lois earlier. George was an old hand at revamping, rejuvenating and adding a twist to familiar concepts. In the late '60s, he created a very memorable commercial campaign for Maypo (an oatmeal product that many readers today may not be familiar with) that included celebrities like Joe Namath and Mickey Mantle crying to the camera, with the signature line “*I want my Maypo!*” Fifteen years later, when that audience was in their teenage years, he revamped this campaign for MTV with celebrities like Sting, Pat Benatar, and Mick Jagger screaming, “*I want my MTV!*” Some of us weren't even sure why that campaign resonated, or why it seemed so familiar, but we were drawn to it out of that vague familiarity. George had done what most good marketers do: take the familiar and make it fresh.

Unfortunately, freshness isn't usually the active word in the B2B marketing space. There are so many clichés in B2B ads that to list them here would take up an entire book. By the same token, many of these tried-and-(sometimes)-true ad approaches do work despite their overuse, and I will explain how. So, without further ado, here is a list of typical ads, and ad approaches, you'll see over and over again in B2B trade:

1. “**Introducing...**”

You have a new product. You want to give it a coming-out party for your audience. It has a world of new features, is dramatically better than the competition, and screams for advertising that notices these things. Instead, we get “*Introducing the Newest Advance in Accounting Software.*” Agencies love “Introducing.” In fact, they love it too much. It's old, it's cliché, and you can be sure that there will always be another ad with the word “Introducing” at the head of it in the same publication or site you're advertising in.

2. “The Best (Product Here) I’ve Ever Used!”

[Celebrity/Industry Spokesman Here]

Make no mistake: endorsement ads are important. For some businesses, they drive sales better than any feature-based advertisement possibly can. The problem with most endorsement ads is they feature endorsers known only by industry old-timers and, in a country where youth is omnipotent, using minor to sub-minor celebrities to hawk your wares is about as exciting and substantial as Ed Wood hawking Bela Lugosi long past his prime. Good celebrity endorsements require a solid public relations agency, a budget, and time. If you are unwilling to invest, you should look into another type of advertisement.

On the other hand, if you can find a cost-effective celebrity who fits your niche perfectly and can come across as a surprising choice (like William Shatner for Priceline), you might have something most celebrity endorsements don’t—that unique twist that can turn a cliché on its head.

3. “In a World...”

This phrase isn’t just the bane of B2B advertisers; you’ll also find it in nearly every other action movie trailer you’ll see this year. “*In a World of Low-Cost Vacuum Cleaners, Only One Product Stands out...*” The problem I have with the “In a World...” approach is how little it tells you about the uniqueness of the product or service advertised. The intention, of course, is to separate your product from the negative aspects of the competition, but what the advertiser ends up doing instead is giving the viewer the opportunity to question whether this product or service is part of the problem as well.

4. “Does Your Product or Service Act Like This?”

Similar to “In a World...” but potentially more brand de-

structive, these types of ads usually show the ugly side of a product or service. For example, “*Does your call center connect?*” might show a slovenly phone operator filing her nails while her entire switchboard lights up. The subhead and body copy will usually explain the benefits of *your* call service and how it is different from this exaggerated outcome, but most viewers will be left with a negative feeling, either about the service industry itself or a misplaced belief that your service fits into this category as well (the result, usually, of viewers not reading the full ad—which most of them won’t). A way to counter this kind of negative ad is to cut your design in two and make the negative much smaller in scale to the positive.

5. **LARGE WORD!**

There are very few ads I want screaming at me, let alone screaming something of as little profundity as “STRENGTH” or “ENDURANCE.” The big word ad is there to get your attention, and having done a few myself, I know that the approach works under certain circumstances. As I explained earlier, ad design needs to be tailored, on some level, to the design of the competition. In the same way that Kraft, during the process of approving new package designs for its products, will align its new design next to its shelf companions for comparison, you as a marketer need to find out what kind of look will stand out from the clutter.

Furthermore, as long as the message is strong and resonates, you can find yourself with a very successful lead generator.

6. **Comparisons**

Their product, our product. Notice the difference? Comparison campaigns have been around forever, from taste tests to Bounty paper towels. They are the go-to idea when you’ve

exhausted your first few inspired ideas. The high mark for this kind of campaign was Rolling Stone magazine's first foray into advertising: "*Perception, Reality.*" Directed at their readers (but also at their advertisers) this campaign contrasted the perception of who their audience was and the reality of what they actually really were (for example, the hippie of old was, today, a well-off businessman). Although there is always room for a new twist on the comparison campaign (which GEICO proved recently with their customer "taste test" commercials), nine times out of ten these ads tell you what you already know.

7. **The Bullet-Pointed Monster**

The best ads, whether consumer or business, focus on one unique selling proposition. Why? Because it's easier for the audience to focus on one message at a time. Most businesses (particularly those that sell products with many features) want to cram their ads with every possible feature, specification, and technical detail they can. The assumption is that they are paying for the ad space, so they may as well get the most out of it. Although this approach is practical for ads that appear in the yellow pages, it tends to diminish the value of the product or service when this type of ad appears in respectable trade publications.

What you want to do with B2B is bridge the gap between what you want to say and what you should settle for saying. You can always produce a campaign instead of a single ad, and use each one of your three or four selling propositions as an individual conversation.

8. **"A History of Service"**

Ads that tout a company's longevity draw a fine line between promoting experience and casting themselves as old-timers. Whether longevity works for your company or not

depends completely on your business. If you're a local company that specializes in tree care, that history might work in your favor. If you're a communications or electronics company, history isn't what your audience wants. Instead, your target customers want forward-thinking companies that are innovative and cutting edge. Very few companies can pull this off: one that did is Mercedes, which ran commercials showing the history of its cars. Unfortunately, most campaigns fail when they try this approach.

9. **Inspirationally Vacant**

Nothing is less effective than an advertisement with a vague, clichéd image and an equally vague headline. How many times have you seen ad or banner with “inspirational” images, such as hands holding a globe or someone standing on top of a mountain, and a headline like “Moving Forward”? More than you've probably taken notice of. The body copy for these ads usually explain that these companies are forward thinking and on top of their game, but their advertising is as vanilla as it gets. These are the kinds of ads that nobody remembers because they all mesh into each other. To break the cliché, the ad needs to be specific: *How* a company is forward looking is far more interesting than merely stating it is.

10. **The Clunky Visual Metaphor**

Finding the right animal, vegetable, or mineral to convey the message for your ad campaign is a tough egg to crack for even the best creative mind. More times than not, the visual metaphor used is clichéd and tired. Now, I'm a sucker for any good visual pun, but oft-used clichés, like the missing puzzle piece for example, isn't one of them. This cliché is used to show the customer that the company in question is what the customer needs to complete the puzzle that is their service

or product. It's a very tired concept that, like Inspirationally Vacant, will cause a customer's eyes to glaze over.

There are better arguments you can make to show how your product or service fits into your client's needs. Once again, find the specifics that appeal to your client's needs rather than another vague general phrase, and you'll have a better chance of winning your audience's attention. Regarding imagery, the list is endless. Most B2B ads today are developed not with true creative in mind but expediency. As a result, most marketers find their imagery through stock photo houses. The best ones, Getty and Corbis, have some beautiful shots that would cost a ton if you had to hire a photographer. But that isn't even part of the mindset of the typical designer. He or she is thinking "business" and spending more time on the type layout (which is nearly always smaller than 10 point on the page) than on the power of the image they choose. As a result, the same types of images are used over and over and over again. Ask yourself how many times you've seen the following (courtesy 101cliches.com):

1. *Close-up of two shaking hands*
2. *A light bulb*
3. *The tin can phone*
4. *A hammer breaking a piggy bank*
5. *Cheetahs*
6. *Chess pieces*
7. *A mountain climber*
8. *A Swiss army knife*
9. *An eagle*
10. *A signpost*
11. *A magnifying glass*
12. *A group of business people smiling*

13. *Scales*

14. *A dictionary definition*

Although clichéd images are sometimes unavoidable on a small budget (where your only option is a limited list of stock photo houses and royalty-free photos), a good message goes a long way in helping you find a better visual signature for your campaign. In addition, most of the above clichés can be turned on their heads with a clever twist and good bit of Photoshop work. Always remember this when it comes to creating an ad:

1. Your message is most important

Your headline needs to cut through the clutter and speak directly to your audience in a matter-of-fact, non-salesy way.

2. Your image needs to add dimension to your headline and message

Most of the images above are considered cliché because they are plopped into an advertisement with little thought other than co-opting the visual message they bring with them. Good advertising happens when everything works together.

3. Your subhead and body copy should add to what we already learn from the headline and image

In short, there cannot be a disconnect between any elements of your advertisement. These three things cannot be developed separately then shoved together.

Lastly, a good advertisement should be part of a larger campaign with an overall theme. Themes are what stay with the customer longer than the details of a headline. Themes reinforce your brand and create an overall umbrella by which all messaging evolves. And the point of a theme? Repetition.

The more you repeat, the easier it will be for the customer to remember.

Many B2B Advertisers Don't Embrace Change

What we hear sometimes from new clients is that they're doing fine. Their business is doing well. Their previous advertising efforts haven't necessarily failed, and their modus operandi have proven successful up to this point, so why buck a trend? Our response is usually to ask why they've considered our services in the first place. Change is difficult, and many companies (even successful ones) don't always see the practicality in doing anything different in terms of their brand (if it exists) or how they are perceived. This institutional resistance is reinforced by legal departments that tend to put the kibosh on any proposal that proves too complicated to navigate through easily. New marketing strategies, which naturally require some form of social initiatives and blogging, are the easiest target for these departments, as both approaches require a bit of trust on the part of the company and a degree of complexity in how they are filtered out to the greater world. Let's face it: if your blogger's articles need to be approved in the same time-consuming process that a press release does, they will never have the immediacy that makes blogging so powerful. As a result, most marketing efforts exist at the margins: a new look for an ad or online work, an updated website look with little new material, trade show material, and maybe a few safe press releases that get easy approval about a new product or employee. In the end, the sales force will continue doing what it always does without the benefit and the enthusiasm that a new campaign has to re-energize them, and everything will be business as usual.

Simply put, a resistance to change today, or any day, is

anathema to a company's bottom line.

Consistency and Repetition Are Everything; Most B2B Campaigns Don't Have It

Create an ad, that's one impression. Create a brand, you've got multiple impressions. Today more than ever, when a company's image exists in the real world, the digital world, and the trade space all at once, consistency in look and message is paramount.

Some companies tend to view their products and services as unique to each other, islands unto themselves. For example, a company that sells computers to educators may also sell microchips to other computer manufacturers. What tends to happen, especially when several sales units are involved, is that different marketing managers are assigned to different product or market divisions. As such, each marketing manager uses different vendors, rarely integrates with other divisions, and there ends up being very little consistency in messaging and design. As a result, what you have are two or three or four different campaigns that may share nothing in common other than the company logo—if even that.

Smaller companies may experience the same issues due to the lack of a marketing department rather than the expansion of one. These companies usually have one person doing everything. He or she has to manage multiple sales departments or individuals and may receive different messaging from each sales division, thus accounting for the lack of continuity between ads. Either way, there is a component in this process that is being neglected.

In the end, there is a reason we equate orange and blue with the New York Mets, or magenta and orange with Dunkin' Donuts. There's a reason why "*Ideas For Life*" is found on every

single bit of messaging for Panasonic and why we instinctively remember the catchphrase “*What Can Brown Do for You?*” when someone mentions UPS. Consistency. It not only imprints the memory of your product name on the viewer; it also reinforces the idea that your company is an organized brand that knows who it is.

Many B2B Marketers Haven’t Got a Clue About Social Marketing

There is a huge chasm between companies that have used social marketing and have some idea about what they’re doing and those that use it for the first time and are completely and utterly lost. Watching some B2B companies navigate through the unfamiliar waters of social marketing is kind of like watching a polite vegan fill up his plate at a Swedish smorgasbord. He has no idea what he’s selecting and has little intention of eating it, but if everyone else is doing it, he can’t be impolite. For your social marketing to work, it requires knowledge of all the components, how they work together, and what you can expect as an outcome. It requires strategy—and an understanding of your client. It also requires a mindset that embraces everything current, because nothing is as current as a Twitter post or the speed to which online news organizations push information to the masses.

David Meerman Scott, bestselling author of eight books including *Real-Time Marketing and PR*, offers Eloqua, a marketing software outfit, as an example of how a company’s embrace of social marketing as a useful tool has actually resulted in millions of dollars of business. Eloqua’s CEO uses Google Alerts in his BlackBerry to inform him in real time of news about his company and the industry at large. One night at dinner with David, his BlackBerry buzzed, and the news at the

other end informed him that one of Eloqua's competitors was just sold to Oracle. Big news, one would expect, but even for Oracle, the B2B pipeline moves much slower than it should. He returned to their offices to see how saturated this news was across the web.

What did he discover? That single item—the alert that the company president had received—was the sole news story on this acquisition. As purveyors of real-time media, he knew an opportunity had presented itself. Within two hours, he wrote a blog post discussing the merger and how it benefits Eloqua's business model. This was an even-handed article. The competitor wasn't disparaged, and the goal of it was to provide a fresh perspective on the sale where nothing else existed. The immediacy of the article paid off. As the news spread, his article was quoted alongside Oracle's original press release. It received thousands of hits and allowed Eloqua to own what Scott refers to as the "second paragraph" of the story.

Eloqua's second move was to blast an email to its existing clients as well as prospects that Eloqua knew were clients of the competition. Surprisingly, many of the competitor's clients were unaware of this new announcement since the schedule for the official press release would not be until the next day or even later. In short, Eloqua was able to capitalize on this news, sway more than a million dollars' worth of business its way, and brand itself in the process as a company that's always on top of things, even during dinnertime. Scott has since branded the act "newsjacking", and made it the topic of his most recent book, *Newsjacking: How to Inject your Ideas into a Breaking News Story and Generate Tons of Media Coverage*.

Unfortunately, most companies don't have the kind of infrastructure to enable their employees, let alone the CEO, to blog or tweet on their behalf without going through a time-intensive gate-keeping process.

Social marketing is all about immediacy. It necessitates engaging in real time with customers. Its enemy is the rigid marketing plan that has no place for it and the company that sees no value in it. Because a portion of your competition fits this rigid profile, it might be time for your company to break the mold. The first step is to do what the competition neglects to do and *own* your spot on the web.

Try this. Search Google and find the most appropriate keywords for your category. You may be lucky enough to grab the best position on page one. Fortunately for many, the competition's sluggishness is your opportunity, and that sluggishness is rooted in a much more damaging mindset—that many B2B companies don't think marketing will help them at all.

Many B2B Company Leaders Don't Think Marketing Will Matter At All

A few years ago, I was an exhibitor at a trade show. It was a successful one. I found three new clients through it. One of them was a large company that needed some collateral work done. Another was an ad agency that was looking for an outfit with web expertise. The third was a mid-sized company that specialized in architecture and home inspections. This company had its own building on the south shore of Long Island and had been in business for 50 years. The current owner was the son of the founder. Suffice it to say, this will very quickly become a familiar tale.

The current owner maintained and grew the business through word of mouth. When he saw the opportunity to be profitable in different areas of his field, he took quick advantage of it (that's how he began the company's architecture division). He kept the business chugging forward by keeping his salaries

manageable, his service consistent, and his name on the tongue of every property lawyer in his county (because the majority of the company's work came through the sale and leasing of business spaces). He advertised infrequently in the law journals that were popular for those lawyers and...well, that was that. He had his routine. When he saw some of our web work, he decided it was time to update his website.

Unfortunately, his motives for doing so parallel my story about the vegan at the smorgasbord. He felt obligated to update his website; he wasn't doing it because of any conviction about whether it would provide a benefit. In short, he didn't believe marketing worked. What he failed to realize was that his success was, in fact, supported through marketing efforts. He had boxes full of pamphlets created for every different specialty, and he routinely mailed these out to potential clients... but he didn't recognize this as a direct mail campaign. He collected email lists manually and had his administrative people place them in an Excel file for future use... but he never recognized this as his email push. Like many small businesses that stay comfortably where they are, marketing and advertising are perceived as a waste of money. There is no direct return on investment. Unless a potential client comes to you and tells you he saw your ad or found you on the web (and many do), the money isn't the same as a cost-per-item.

Filtering out your marketing message can sometimes be a slow drip. Large companies know this and invest in it. They understand that the most important thing their marketing department can do is oil the machine of sales. When a salesperson talks to a lead and discovers she's heard of his company, it makes his sale that much easier. Does it always guarantee the sale? There's never a guarantee on *any* sale unless all pistons are working in unison, and even then, it's subjective based on the new company's needs, the economy, and where they are in their

sales cycle.

Still, depending on the business, the ROI for marketing *can* be sufficiently more direct. For example, one of our clients is a hair-replacement company that gets a portion of its leads through the online products we've developed—a mix of YouTube postings, keyword marketing, and page-one Google searches. The company receives around 15 leads per month. Because every lead is also forwarded to me in addition to the marketing manager, I can say with certainty that 80% of them are people either looking for the company's service directly or looking to include it in their own salons. Given the reasonable rate we charge to them per year to manage their social marketing and website updates (and given that their products start at \$5,000), the money this company has made from our efforts is pretty considerable. Marketing DOES work. But if you don't believe in it, and if people like me cannot convince you otherwise, then that, as they say, is that.

“We’re in the middle of a communications revolution with an explosion of new media channels, including social networks, to reach your buyers directly. But most B2B companies act as if we’re still in the 1950s. This is not your grandfather’s era. If you want to grow your business, you need to adopt the strategies Bill outlines in this book.”

David Meerman Scott,

bestselling author of *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*,
now in over 25 languages from Bulgarian to Vietnamese.

**To read the rest of B2B A To Z,
Click Here to buy it on Amazon.com**

