



Marketing is really about “selling perception.”

I know, I know. You’re thinking there’s *a lot* more to it than that. You also have to know “how” to create the narrative, “who” the audience is, “where” to place your message, “when” the right time is, and all the extra details in between. But if we really think about it, marketing’s ability to direct and shape people’s thinking and feelings about your company is what’s at the core of what we do and how successful we can become. It’s all about perception.

PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING

-The Perceived Value Of Your Product Is As Important As Its Actual Value-

When a consumer decides whether to buy from you or from a competitor, they weigh the wins and losses that they believe they’ll receive when making that purchase. Your *perceived value* is all about the positive impact that purchase will have on your consumer, and those potential outcomes are what compel people to spend their hard-earned money. So, the “picture” you paint of the customer’s life after they buy your product gives them the important information they need to make the decision in your favor.



Understanding and highlighting how your products and services can improve the lives of your customers is a very powerful application. Keep in mind there are often multiple benefits and outcomes your product provides, as different people value different things. For example, someone may find that the security your product provides is of a high ranking importance to them, while another may find that the quality is what motivates them to purchase.

Identifying these elements means that you can significantly increase the effectiveness of your marketing by crafting clear and compelling messages that shape and influence the perceived value for your potential customers. Find those values, and be very clear with your messaging for each intended individual. **People buy outcomes not products.**

We created a handy *Elements of Value Pyramid* to help you with determining your benefits. [Download here.](#)



-Upgrade Your Customer's Perception Of You, And You Upgrade Your Revenue-

Let me share with you a quick story. In 1938, Old Spice was first introduced as the sophisticated body wash product for the sophisticated older gentleman. And for a very long time it was considered the scent profile of the American granddad, which made it --well, old. In the 2000's the business started losing market share to younger, more "hip" brands like AXE Body Spray and other products entering the shopping space. Men just didn't want to smell like their Granddad.

So, in 2010 they changed their perceived value. They didn't just revise their advertising, they upgraded their positioning, audience, and identity. Old Spice decided that "swagger" was a perception that would positively influence how people saw their product, as being "fun", "hip", and "cool". Young male consumers, who were barely noticing their product, began to see NFL player Isaiah Mustafa appear in hundreds of commercials and social videos in the "Man You Wish Your Man Could Smell Like" ads. Throw in a fun social marketing push that encouraged men to upload their photos to swaggerise.com and the new Old Spice was off and running.

It only took 6 months for their new perception to boost sales of their body wash by 27%, and purchases of their Swagger scent *quadrupled* in their first year of sales! They are now one of the most successful male grooming brands on the market.



-How Are You Different And What Is That Value To The Customer-

There are so many more examples of how understanding an audience and controlling the narrative will increase a company's revenue. From Starbucks (changing from a holistic shop that sold music to promoting a higher quality of coffee beans), to Dove (positioning as a body-positive empowerment company), and even Target (from a low-brow discount store to a favorite of the yuppie class).

How do companies change consumer perception about a product or service? By communicating with their customers! Some of my favorite ways to increase conversations with customers include: providing personalized customer service, engaging on social media, creating new opportunities for more feedback, sharing real customer testimonials, and reviewing and acting on customer ratings. Businesses that make a real effort to understand their audience give themselves a **tremendous advantage** when they use this information to shape their advertising messages.

A study published by Deloitte in 2019, reported that loyal customers prefer to repeat brands in the same way they would with friends and family, using words like love, adore, and happy. And just like what we want from friends and family, consumers want brands to listen to them, understand their feelings, and reply to their feedback with authenticity.

-Your Customers Are The Reason You Exist-

These days people are looking for consistent and reliable experiences that are worth loyal, repeat purchases and experiences that are shareable on social channels. There are many ways we can shape our perception with consumers, through touch points such as advertising, personal experience, customer service, reputation, and price. Unfortunately most companies don't take the time to build a thoughtful, cohesive messaging strategy to help shape those experiences and contribute to the overall brand.

Perception doesn't change overnight. Thankfully, advertising gives you the ability to manage the reach and the frequency of your messages. So, grab control of your perspective. Create your narrative. Recognize your touch points, and be consistent and authentic with your audience. Taking the necessary steps to improve how customers perceive you, *will* make all the difference.

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