Grumpy’s guide to marketing

BRIAN H MEREDITH TAKES THE VIEW OF A "GRUMPY OLD MARKETING BUGGER" TO DESCRIBE THE TRUE CONCEPT, UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MARKETING.

AFTER SEVERAL DECADES

in the advertising and then marketing business, I must admit to becoming a grumpy old bugger.

Grumpy about the entire concept, understanding and implementation of “marketing”. It starts with a common articulation of the concept: “Arresting the human intelligence for long enough to extract money from it.” No. That’s wrong. That’s mugging.

The right articulation is: “An organisation will only achieve its goals by identifying and/or creating needs and wants amongst its chosen target market/s and fulfilling them, time after time after time.”

Then there is the belief that ‘marketing’ is a promotional verb. In reality, however, it is so much more than that. In fact, it is the definition of what an organisation is – profit or not for profit – it is a marketing organism. And it is this before it is anything else.

Why? Because the market is the only place the money comes from, so a business needs to be designed and operated with that reality at the top of the list. An obsession with shareholder needs is common and not appropriate. Shareholders do give money but then they want it back, plus some more. That can only happen if successful customer relationships and transactions occur.

Another issue is the approach that sees a ‘marketing department’ as a functional unit. Whilst this is partially true, it falls well short of the important reality of the marketing organism.

And how many marketing people sit at the top table?

Hardly any.

Why? Because of my last remark – that marketing departments are regarded as functional units and nothing more.

In reality, a Head of Marketing has a huge contribution to make to the development and management of any organisation and should be on the top table.

I recall being invited to sit-in on a client’s board meeting many years ago. It was a long standing relationship I gained from; how and why.” I delivered it with a clear sense of humour and Jack laughed vigorously.

But, deep down, I meant it. How many organisations have Marketing Plans?

Worryingly few. Whether they are separate or integrated into the overall Business Plan, it is vital that the following elements are addressed:


2. Key Issues – What are the key issues facing the business from a marketing perspective?

3. SMART Objectives – Designed to specifically address the key issues (Specific. Measurable. Achievable. Realistic. Timetabled) – and this applies not just to numeric objectives but ALL objectives.

4. Strategy and Tactics – What are you going to do and how are you going to do it?

5. Metrics – Track the performance of your strategy and tactics against your SMART objectives.

And what is your biggest and vital marketing resource? Not advertising and promotion; not social media; not PR. These are all key elements but the most vital resource is your people. And even more importantly, your front-line people. They are mini marketing directors because they are the people most of your customers have regular contact with and act on behalf of those customers.

Every behaviour of every one of your people will have a marketing effect – positive or negative. Never neutral. And those behaviours are the living manifestations of your Brand.

So why are so few front-line people trained and supported in these areas?