

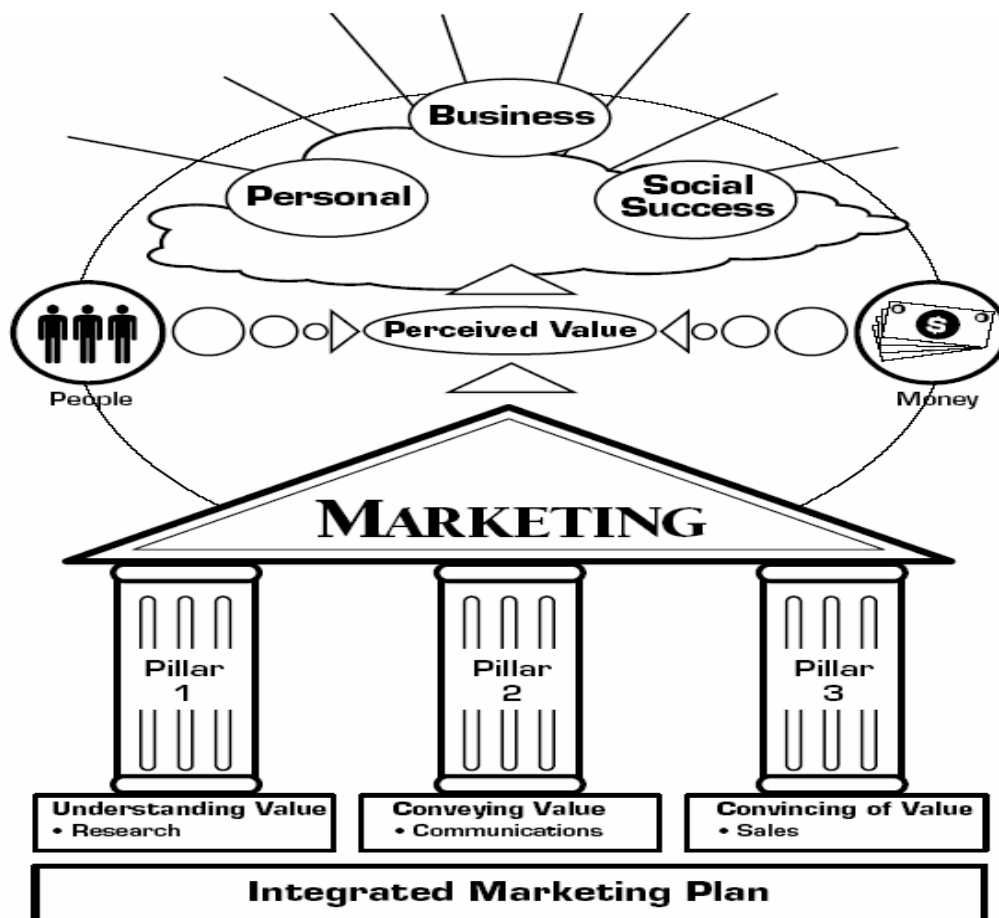
**MARKETING: A SET OF
TOOLS**

The way that most people come into contact with marketing is when they get involved in the business world, and then see how marketing is used to sell products, services or ideas.

In the business world, the word marketing and sales are often used interchangeably. In reality, though, they are different, as you will soon begin to learn.

Marketing is a set of tools.

I empower people by giving them access to the tools of marketing. What do I mean?



The diagram above shows a house, what I call the house of marketing. It is built on three pillars - market research, marketing communications and sales.

Each has its own role and responsibility in the marketing world. You may think marketing is just sales or advertising, but this is not the complete picture.

Marketing is market research, marketing communication (or advertising) and sales working together to deliver value to the marketplace. These are the sub-components that make up marketing.

The tools deliver value.

If you have read my books you will have learned that marketing is about bringing value to the marketplace. In the case of business the value is your product, service or idea. In the case of getting a job, it is your skill sets, and in the case of a relationship, it could be your character, personality or persona.

The world always pays for value. But the value is value that is important to others and this is called perceived value. If you bring me something I value, why would I not be interested?

But people usually think in the reverse - they bring things to the market that they are convinced are great, but that others don't value. Then they get upset and confused when the market does not respond.

People buy products and build relationships with you because it is of value to them. All people are self-centered, and you have to appeal to their needs. How do you do this? Use the tools of marketing. Do your homework first. Find out up front what it is that people want out of a relationship with you, be it business or personal. Do this using market research. Market research is a tool that was designed to collect market data in a systematic and logical fashion.

Once you do this, you are in a strong position to convey it to them through your advertising effort, and you will be on the mark, which is the first part of Marketing! People will be responsive to your proposition. Logical, isn't it?

And because people are busy, you may have to meet them one on one to convince them that you have something of value for them. This is sales.

The tools of marketing can be applied to any situation.

1. Find out what people want. Do your homework.
2. Communicate this need via your advertising.
3. Convince them via your personal contact.

The approach is universal, and is what makes the tools of marketing so powerful. Never assume that marketing is just for the business world, or that it is not for you. Marketing is for everyone. We all need to bring value to others to get what we want in life, be it a pay raise, promotion, or internship.

The end result of quality marketing is positive value, or perceived value to others. If you do this, the world will respond to you.

Tool Number 1: Market Research. What is of value to others? Marketing always starts with market research. But most people prefer to start with the sale. They try to sell products, services and ideas that no one wants or needs. This is called the "hard sell" and is what gives marketing such a bad name.

But quality marketing always starts with market research to figure out what the market wants. This is a revelation to some people, but common sense to marketing folks.

Market research is the tool used to find the opportunity to add value! I see marketing as universal, broad and multi-dimensional. To be successful at starting a business or growing an existing one, research your market or collection of customers. Ask some basic questions: What do they want? What are they not getting? Negative feedback is better than no feedback!

What will they be willing to pay if you delivered what they wanted?

Professional marketing folks have an arsenal of sub-tools available to them in the area of market research. They are called primary and secondary research. These methods and approaches are used to get a good handle on where the opportunity is to add value.

Primary gets information directly from the horse's mouth, by interviewing customers directly. It includes focus groups. Secondary is getting it from published sources, trade magazines and directories.

Either way, the tool of market research is a powerful one, but many times the most under-used tool when building the house of marketing. Most folks will simply advertise or sell without having any idea what their customers really want.

Tool Number 2: Marketing Communications. How do we communicate value?

Marketing communications or advertising is used to communicate your message of value to the world.

Someone is always trying to communicate a message of value to you. They have taken the time and effort and spent money to generate a message. Marketing communication is very powerful. The media to a high degree controls the way you think and act on a daily basis.

The marketing communication team usually consists of a copy writer, artist, graphics designer, editor and publishing team. These folks are highly trained and skilled in making sure your message is communicated succinctly and clearly to the right audience.

If you have done your market research well, this information is fed to the marketing communication folks. They will take this input and tell you how best to communicate the message of value.

So now you are starting to see how marketing is not only a set of tools, but how the tools work together!

In most cases if your message is powerful enough, you don't even need the third pillar of sales to complement your ad. You can start to effectively deliver your message.

Tool Number 3: Sales

Sales is not marketing. Instead, as you have seen, sales is a component of marketing. It really is the mechanism of persuading and convincing people you have something of value for them.

There is an overlap between marketing communication and sales. The way to think about it is that marketing communication is the medium and visuals, and sales are the content.

In most cases sales is really one person talking directly to another. You see, just sending a piece of literature or running an ad may not always work. People like to talk to people. They like to be convinced on a one-on-one basis. People are skeptical about what they see in writing, and they need to walk through what is in print. This needs a sales professional.

Sales is a tool, and as with any tool, it has a purpose and function. It is to persuade and convince people you have something of value for them. Sales is a profession, the oldest profession in the world. As a profession, it needs specialist training.

Summary

Once you understand that marketing is a set of tools, then you are empowered to use the tools however you see fit. The concept is the same, be it business, personal or social.

1. Find out what the other person wants. Spend time doing upfront market research. If you are in business you may want to design a comprehensive questionnaire, or do a focus group. If you are an individual, you may prefer to simply come up with a list of questions to get someone's input on the situation. The goal is the same - to find out what others value. With this knowledge you will be in a strong position to add value!
2. Now that you know what is of value to your market, design a marketing communications plan around it. Say the other person is someone that you like, and would like to develop a business or personal relationship with, and your research has shown they like fishing. Communicate some value to them about fishing. Tell them about upcoming events, trade shows, trade magazines, and send them articles.
3. You may have to go out and do some direct selling, which means convincing people. In the example above, you have built a rapport with a potential business prospect that likes fishing. But you want to sell him computer software. After sending the fishing information, you should have also sent information on your computer software, showing the value to the prospect. This may need a face to face

meeting. This is the sales component.

These tools on their own can be powerful. Working together, they are explosive.

But the problem with marketing today is that it is fragmented and not integrated. Many people will use one or two of the tools, usually sales or advertising. The only way the tools can have maximum impact and effectiveness is to work together, the way they were designed. This way you develop a fully integrated marketing plan.

As you have seen, marketing has rhyme, logic and reason. It is not about creating hype, it is about delivering value, value that others want and place importance on. This can only be done by going about the process of marketing in a logical and systematic way.

