

How to Market Your B2B Business in 2018

Are you looking for the latest and greatest marketing info on the planet? Do you want to grow your business exponentially in 2018? Do you want to make a lot more money?

Stick around and I'll introduce you to the model that will help you accomplish all that and much, much more.

Where Is Marketing Headed?

The trouble with marketing now is it's all over the place. Even the experts are grappling with questions such as: Is digital marketing separate from regular marketing? Should it be equal to or subordinate to marketing? Or should there not be a CMO anymore, and instead have the function run by a group of "officers," like experience officers and revenue officers, and customer officers?

In the Harvard Business Review article, "There are 4 futures for CMOs (some better than others)" < <https://hbr.org/2017/09/there-are-4-futures-for-cmos-some-better-than-others> >, the authors detail what's plaguing marketing: "we're entering into a new age of digital transformation. ...Today's consumers and business buyers have more choices and higher expectations than ever before. They want companies to be more human: to remember who they are, know what they like, and use that understanding to help them achieve their purpose. For companies, this requires an unprecedented level of integration and coordination across every business unit, from sales and marketing to customer service, and across physical and digital channels. This poses a deep challenge to companies organized by product and function rather than a customer-centric model like experience and value."

Sounds complicated and a little scary right? If there ever was a giant sucking sound in marketing, this is it.

Now, you may be thinking that your business is small, and these types of marketing issues don't affect you. Well, think again.

I've been in marketing since 1996. In that time, I've seen a lot of marketing channels, tactics, strategies, models, and ideas. I've been late to the party more than once, but the one pattern I have recognized in marketing is: everything the Harvard Business Review, or Phillip Kotler author of over 20 marketing books says, will affect the Fortune 500 and Global 1000 this year, and will affect almost every other business in the world within 3 – 5 years.

It's just a matter of time before the pressures of consumer behavior will affect your business too, and you will be grappling with the very same issues the Fortune 500 are grappling with this year.

Pointing Towards a Marketing Solution

The trick is to realize this and be the first in your industry to review and consider implementing the ideas of the Fortune 500.

Not all of them will be a fit, but some of them will explode the profits in your business because you will be the only one using them. This will give you a distinct advantage. If you maintain that advantage, you can grow your business as big as you want.

The only problem is, what do you choose?

Well, you have options. Here's the ones I came up with:

- Try everything & see what works
- Pick and choose what you will try based on some criteria
- Look to others who have tried, for ideas (particularly those who have tried everything).

Right now, B2B marketers, should:

- Track your marketing
- Have digital marketing goals (and strategies to achieve them)
- Review digital marketing analytics weekly
- Have marketing automation in place
- Have at least an intermediate level of sophistication with your email marketing
- Have a blog, post regularly, and promote it
- Utilize lead magnets
- Build sales and marketing funnels
- Engage leads across paid, earned, and owned media
- Align Sales and Marketing
- AND ... Use Agile marketing ideas

Side note: salespeople have a whole slew of things they should be doing now too, but I'll save that for a different article.

What Marketing Needs

The problem is, I estimate over 60% of businesses who should be doing the easiest things on the above list, aren't. What's worse, a fair portion doesn't even know about these marketing ideas.

What marketing needs is a way to organize all the strategies and tactics into a framework or model so you will always know what to do, have an idea of how to do it, and probably most importantly – know what you are missing.

It also needs a method for organizing the campaigns, testing, measuring and optimizing them. And, it needs to be focused on results.

At Mindwhirl, we've been trying to achieve that for 15 years. We started with a marketing map and then added a sales system. As we reviewed and optimized our business processes, it became clear that these two "models" had overlap.

That overlap became what we are now calling the Agile B2B Client Acquisition Model, but I'll get into that in a second.

[[[Get Your Copy of the Agile B2B Client Acquisition Model Here!](#)]]

Let me ask you a question:

Are you 100% confident in your marketing strategy? Do you fully understand all the available options now? Do you understand how your SEO is affected by your content, and how social fits in? Are you tracking and measuring? Do you know your pipeline and funnel? How many leads do you have? How many are you actively working? What's your pipeline velocity? Who are your target personas? Etc.

You may think the odds of a new competitor with deep pockets coming into your industry with a bright idea, are slim, but if it did happen, could you compete? Would you be prepared to quell the upstart?

When I start work for a new client, I think from the upstart's position. I ask myself what I would have to do to offer amazing value and turn an industry on its head.

The reason is, that's about what it takes to get noticed now days.

Now pardon me for being a dude, but when I think of upstarts, I think of the British “fleet” versus the Spanish armada.

Imagine, a massive amount of smaller, lighter, faster, nimbler, more agile vessels with a few guns, versus hundreds of Spanish galleons armed to the teeth with hundreds of guns on multiple decks.

Who would win?

All bets were on the obvious winner: the Spanish armada.

But the British destroyed the Spanish armada. The Spanish didn’t just retreat and run home with their tail between their legs. No, there was no Spanish armada after the encounter with the British. It was torn asunder and lies on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

Heard of Rommel? Or Blitzkrieg?

Hitler didn’t capture Europe and Northern Africa by going slow and rooting out every enemy combatant. He blew past them in tanks and cut their supply lines and made them come out or starve.

Just as the lesson of the Spanish armada teaches, our businesses and our ability to acquire clients too must be light, fast, nimble, and agile.

And that’s what marketing needs. It needs to understand the strategies and tactics in play right now on the field of business. And it needs to be able to implement a strategy in a light, fast, nimble, and agile way.

We’ve found that is achieved with three key tools:

- The Agile B2B Client Acquisition Model
- Agile Marketing Ideas and Methods
- Templates for everything. Ex. Ads, emails, webinars, messages, testing patterns, etc.

The Agile B2B Client Acquisition Model

The Agile B2B Client Acquisition model unites sales and marketing through content and process. It details a model for marketing which is as close to the reality of how marketing works now as we can devise.

That means you can follow the model to build a client acquisition machine that gets sales and

marketing to work together in a coordinated way to acquire leads, educate them, close those who are ready to take action, and nurture the rest to close.

The model helps you know how your client acquisition machine works, and if you are still building it, you know what you are missing.

It details how to use marketing now, and tries to dispel the confusion. For instance, SEO and Social are bound together. How? By content. You can't get on the top of Google without content unless you are using tricks. Similarly, the best use for social media as a business is to promote your content. So, you can't do social without content.

Is that all content is good for?

Turns out, no. If you unite sales and marketing, sales can use that content too. Think about it. Sales teams today are either just saying the same pitch over and over to new people, or they are just checking in, or following up with leads that weren't interested the first time through.

Why can't sales promote content? Especially new content – it gives them something to talk about.

[[Get Your Copy of the Agile B2B Client Acquisition Model Here!]]

When you see the model you'll understand what I'm talking about. Sales and marketing create a type of perpetual motion machine, and each enhances and boosts the other to greater and greater performance and profitability.

We'll go into this deeper and explain how it works in subsequent articles. In the meantime, make sure to pick up your copy of the model so you can understand the basics and get an idea of how it works, and could work in your business.

Agile Marketing Ideas and Methods

Agile has taken the world by storm. It was popularized by software developers as a better way to develop programs. Developers were frustrated by the clients every time they delivered their solution. Invariably, the client would say, "Yeah, you know, now that I see it, it'd be great if it could do X, Y and Z instead of A, B, and C."

So, developers realized they could take the ideas the client is giving them and start building before having detailed plans, and have regular review sessions where the client got to use the program they were having built to give their feedback while in development.

This not only led to a quicker, more agile development process. There were happier clients, and happier developers.

So, they formalized it and called it Agile.

[Even though the terms Agile and Lean had different starts, they are based on similar ideas and have become synonymous.]

When you apply Agile to marketing, you start to realize how less is actually more, and you find you can get a lot more, a lot faster through testing than you can through churning out marketing campaign after marketing campaign in an effort to “feed the beast.”

At Mindwhirl, we’ve verified a lot of what Scott Brinker spoke about in his book “Hacking Marketing.” [<link to book>](#). You can find out more about Scott at chiefmartech.com.

He claimed that if you work in “short loops of incremental and iterative work, with built-in checkpoints for feedback and adaptation ...” you could make amazing gains in productivity, quality and profitability. But if you added “visualizing your work and workflow establishes a framework in which that engine can run fast – yet in a controlled and efficient fashion” you could organize, schedule and control the work.

When we read that we thought, that sounded like something worth testing.

So we went to work adapting our business processes (like Michael Gerber talks about in E-Myth) and tweaking them to fit an Agile/Lean model, and built our business’s marketing around sprints. Sprints are short durations of work with tests built in – like the T.O.T.E. model stipulates.

As we began using this style it was different. The management style was different for me at first, it took some getting used to. But now I feel more a part of a team with my employees/co-workers. Plus, the transparency into the goals of the project and the business make the team feel like they are a part of something, and more importantly for me, they take responsibility for their own productivity.

I could go on and on, but let me just give you one suggestion and a brief example.

First the suggestion: I strongly suggest you read the book, “Hacking Marketing” by Scott Brinker.” He does a great job of explaining the current state of marketing and giving you ideas to build an Agile marketing team like we have done.

As an example of the efficiency levels we have reached, I wanted to give you a case study. A local College asked us to bid on a web design project. We don’t like web design projects, but we really like the Director of Communications. So we helped them to understand why they should hire us on a monthly basis to build out their website – in an Agile way.

A 400+ page website.

They had several bids on the table when we were called in. All of them were over \$120,000 with development timelines of 12 – 18 months.

So, before I tell you how well we performed, let me ask, what would be a good savings in time and/or money?

Say, if we could guarantee the sites' completion in 12 months for \$90K, that would be nice right?

What about 9 months for \$80K? That would be amazing wouldn't it?

Well, the actual figures are astounding.

A 2-person team, 1 working full-time, the other working under 10 hours a week, redesigned the entire 400+ page web site, developed content and graphics, integrated systems like calendars, online courses, faculty databases and a course catalog ...

... in 3 months of development. 4.25 months total, 1 week of planning meetings, 3 months of agile development, and 1 month of training and hand holding.

The total price: \$50,000.

A savings of 9 – 15 months and \$70,000.

Templates for Everything

After you create 10 or 15 marketing campaigns you begin to nail down the processes involved. As you continue, you begin to see patterns. If you track, you will see those patterns repeat again and again in your marketing.

I first noticed this when I was studying copywriting. The sage advice is to keep a copy of all the marketing you like and make a swipe file of it.

The greatest direct response marketers suggest keeping a swipe file of headlines, sub-headlines, hooks, bullets, etc.

I wondered, why we couldn't extend that to offers? Then, what about emails, landing pages, and all the other marketing campaigns and collateral a marketing department generates?

We've done it for everything we can. Including formalizing a method to create a unique selling proposition/value proposition and an irresistible offer.

Using Agile marketing ideas, we've also begun creating message libraries for clients. These libraries hold all the existing marketing messages of the company, plus we expand it with hundreds of headlines and paragraphs of copy around the products and services the client sells and how those products solve real problems for the consumer.

There's a whole lot more to this, that I'll get into later in another article, but for now I want you to understand the value of templating your marketing so you can create high quality marketing quickly -- so you can test quickly, so you can make sales quickly and learn how to further increase conversions and profitability.

Using Agile Marketing, a Reliable Map, and Marketing Templates Gives You A Significant Advantage

So, what do you think the advantages of being able to quickly test campaigns for different personas, markets, segments, audiences, etc. are?

Instead of grinding out new content for campaign after campaign, what if you utilized anchor content and focused on optimizing the experience of your marketing to appeal to today's consumers?

What if you built systems and processes - a machine - that gives today's buyers more choices and fulfills their expectations. That tailors itself to them.

It's only possible through the coordination of the different units of your business. Sales and marketing unification should be the minimum goal.

Of course, it's going to require tools like a marketing automation platform, a CRM, and a blurring of the lines of personnel roles and adjustments to how you market and sell, but the payoff is well worth it.

Trouble is, most business owners, and VPs of Marketing and Sales will want to stick with the status quo and keep everything as it is. That's an option. But whether you like it or not, within the next 3 years, B2B businesses are going to have to figure out how to organize their companies around experience and value.

That can only be achieved by having a model to guide you in the creation of a successful marketing strategy, like our Agile B2B Client Acquisition model, and through rigorous testing, like the Agile marketing ideas suggest.

That will help your company stand out and get attention, while doing it as efficiently and effectively as possible through 2018 and beyond.