

—— Abridged Preface ——

Small Business Marketing - A Guide for Survival, Growth, and Success

Control your own destiny or someone else will.

Jack Welch

Without consistent marketing your small business will not survive.

If you currently own a small business or are thinking about starting one, you are not alone. One of the strongest economic growth trends is found in the creation and maintenance of the modern, digital-age small business. Of all U.S. jobs created in the last decade, 70 percent came from small businesses.

There is something to be said about running your own show. Many Americans are now seeing the benefit of taking one's own financial future and economic destiny into their own hands. Why work for someone else when you can work for yourself? The rewards can be significant, but the challenges are many.

This book will help you define and apply marketing. This book cuts through the marketing guru clutter which represents so much of the current how-to marketing approaches. If I hear the term "best-in-class" again, I will scream! It is old, overused, and just does not declare much. This is not to say the latest guru mentality is a complete waste of time—however, I am saying that a return to basics is a needed reminder. Any professional athlete will tell you that basics are critical. Just ask Tiger Woods or Jack Nicklaus. It's basics first and subtle technique second.

As noted, guru consultants and marketers abound today. I am not one of them. If you're looking for the latest fad, trick, phrase, principle, or approach, this is the wrong book for you. However, if you want the tried-and-true basics of marketing, plus some real-life experience and stories that may help your small business—you are reading the right book. In addition, most of the guru fads are just basic principles of marketing that are repackaged using different terms. Sometimes we experience "marketing amnesia." This book should remind you of some important basics about marketing.

I worked in corporate, high-technology marketing for over 20 years. I worked for some great companies and with some fantastic professionals. Some of what I learned over those 20 years is found in this book, including both the mistakes and the successes. I also teach as an adjunct professor of marketing at some of the well-known, Southern California universities. I love teaching because it forces me back to basics. It also keeps me current and reminds me of what is really important in marketing. Some of those teaching reminders are found in this book, too.

Because this book is a return to the fundamentals of what makes small business marketing great, I challenge you to read each chapter and then ask yourself the following: “How does this apply to my small business? What am I doing right, and what can I change?” Then, read the questions at the end of each chapter. Discuss these with your employees. If you are an “Army of One,” then ask yourself these questions. Each chapter also includes some “Marketing Action Items.” Your goal should be to practice as many of these as you can. Tackle one a day or one a week—just make sure you are consistent.

Each chapter is short, to the point, and a quick read. I have tried to give you bite-sized chunks of marketing wisdom. This book can be either a boardroom or a bathroom read! The greatest wisdom is often found in the smallest bites, so don’t let brevity fool you. Think application.

Part I of the book provides a review of traditional marketing basics. Part II covers the digital marketing age. Part III covers some miscellaneous aspects of marketing. From the definition of marketing and all the way to the wise use of time, I have tried to write chapters that matter to small business marketing. No fluff. I like what works.

In bad or good economic times, it’s the small businesses in the private sector that hold the key to job creation and economic growth. Government will never keep pace with small business innovation. No way—just forget that notion.

Remember: marketing is preventive maintenance for your business. Let it work for you now.

Stuart Atkins, MBA

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