

THE SHARE THIEF[®]

A DIGEST OF IDEAS TO STEAL MARKET SHARE

WWW.STEALINGSHARE.COM

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 10 SUMMER

Guidelines To Stealing Market Share

How Do You Get Started

It does not matter if you are a resort destination, a new fast food sandwich or an automotive widget; the obstacles and difficulties of stealing market share from the competition are the same. Regardless of marketing capabilities, your brand is asking another brand's customers to change their behavior, and that is no simple task. R&D and product improvements help the cause, but these expected standards are not the answer — If they were, Apple Computer would be the dominant player in desktop computing today. Being "the first" brand to do something does not guarantee success either. The marketing landscape is littered with failed firsts. How do you get started taking the right steps toward stealing share? We have developed some tools to help direct and encourage you and would like to share a few with you.

Begin by doing some genetic investigation on your brand's DNA. In order to do this engineering, your brand requires a brand charter, the documentation of your brand's beliefs, purposes, personality, and promises with regard to the customer. Your brand charter is written like a screenplay for your brand execution. A flawed screenplay, no matter how great the cast and director, indicates a box office bomb. Your brand charter provides focus and reason to your marketing endeavors. If you lack a robust brand charter, or if it has collected dust in the marketing director's drawer, you can count on your marketing efforts to be tactical at best. Strategy packs its punch from your brand charter, and without this potency, you exist as a reactionary entity in a dangerously competitive arena.

You Need A Brand Charter

Your charter contains a belief statement, series of promises (why the belief is true), personality descriptor, position statement and marketing statement. However, if your goal is to steal share, the charter

must include a brandface statement, one that lets your marketing department clearly demonstrate how your brand delivers the personal affirmation to your target audience. You must let marketers know how the customers feel about themselves when they use the brand. This comprehension is the means by which you create an unbreakable bond with your customers, which not only prompts their trial but also embroiders brand loyalty into their fabric.

Know Your Customer

The next piece of advice we offer to aid in stealing share is an art as much as it is a science. It is simply "knowing your customer," something that everyone says and rarely accomplishes. Market research as it typically exists has not helped you really

"All too often marketing research is more interested in the form rather than the function."

know your customer because almost all of it is flawed (Check out Brand Thief Volume 6, #6 *Research, Change What You Currently Do*). Almost all of the current market research we observe is not worth the paper upon which it is printed. No real learning or novel insight on consumer beliefs results from such practices. A usage and attitude study indicates what customers do but rarely reveals their beliefs behind their actions and surely does not clarify the precepts that give life to these beliefs.

If you want to place your brand at an advantage over the competition, it needs to align itself with an existing belief. Customers need to see the brand as an emotional extension of their belief

systems because if they see it as such, buying a competitive product is akin to personal betrayal or compromise.

Research

The type of market research essential in stealing share takes root in anthropology more than traditional research. We utilize the same quantitative and qualitative tools, but the questions we ask are different and actionable in nature. It takes weeks worth of work to create a survey worthy of the task of stealing share because it needs to uncover the precepts by which your customer lives their lives as well as completely understanding switching behaviors and cues. Understanding awareness and meaning is important, but even more crucial is the plotting of the decision tree of your potential customer as they make their purchase decisions.

Do not be afraid to test ideas, as marketing is about winning and not academic indulgence. All too often marketing research is more interested in the form rather than the function. In this case "what ifs" and test strategic ideas are functional because we are interested in where the market is going as much as where it is right now.

Don't Follow The Leader

The third and final suggestion we offer is more of a cautionary statement: never ever follow the leader. Copying the market leader seems to make logical sense on the surface because leaders are successful, but as Sun Tzu declares in *The Art of War*, "emerge to their surprise." If you copy the leader, the leader will win. It is never enough to be different; you must be different and better. If you rebuild your brand around your customer instead of around you or your product, and you invest in understanding the belief systems that create the purchase decisions, you are already on your way up.

StealingShare
BEYOND THEORY