




The Complete Guide to Marketing Consultancy.

**Find, Hire And Engage the
Right Support For Your Business.**

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Chapter 1

What is a Marketing Consultant?

If you're looking for expert marketing advice or considering outsourcing some or all of your marketing, then you have a difficult task ahead of you.

Many people struggle to understand what a marketing consultant actually is because there are so many different types of marketing support services and/or providers to choose from. To complicate matters further, each of these providers will take a slightly different approach.

As you search for marketing support suited to your business' individual needs, you are likely to encounter both marketing consultants and marketing agencies, alongside other types of marketing providers.

At face value, a marketing consultant and marketing agency may seem to be performing a similar role. While there is some overlap, there are also some key differences which, unless properly considered, can rapidly lead your business down the wrong path.

This section of our guide is designed to help you make the right decision for your business by providing a definition of a marketing consultant. It explains the nature of their work, and outlines how marketing consultants differ from marketing agencies.

What is a Marketing Consultant?

Commercially, a marketing consultant is understood to be an external specialist and advisor with advanced knowledge of marketing.

Marketing consultants can provide a wide range of services that cover:

- Marketing strategy development
- Audience and market research
- Marketing analysis
- Marketing campaign optimisation
- Campaign management

A marketing consultant empowers businesses to create an effective and strategic marketing approach grounded in data and extensive analysis.

Some marketing consultants may also be able to assist with strategy implementation and execution. Although the extent to which they can provide support in this area will vary between different consultants.



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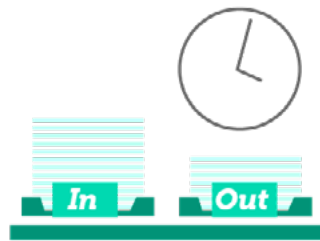
What is a Marketing Consultant?

While some marketing consultants offer a comprehensive array of consultancy services, others provide a narrower, more specialist range. For example, an individual marketing consultant might specialise primarily in advising on conversion optimisation.

The type of marketing consultant best suited for you will depend on:



Your company's
requirements



How you like to work



The skills gaps
within your team



And the problem you
are trying to solve

The answer to the question “what is a marketing consultant?” should always come with an important caveat—which is that every self-proclaimed marketing consultant will answer this question differently.

Answers to this question vary because our understanding of marketing varies so significantly between service providers. Because of this, it's a marketing consultant's approach to marketing that businesses should be interrogating.

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?

“Marketing consultant” is a bit of an umbrella term that applies to a broad range of activities.

As this chapter has already touched on, every marketing consultant will have a slightly different understanding of what their job entails.

So you may be wondering what to expect from marketing consultants.

What do they do on a day-to-day basis?



Marketing
Strategy

the
brand

Brand



SEO and
Content Marketing



Training and
Development



Social
Media



Website
Development



Conversion
Optimisation

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?

Although responsibilities vary depending on the specialist, here are some examples of the activities that marketing consultants may be contracted to undertake:

Marketing Strategy

- Conduct business and marketing analysis to provide recommendations and a roadmap for improvements
- Develop a unified marketing strategy to help you either improve your marketing of your current product or service, or to help you launch a new product or service
- Evaluate a particular marketing campaign strategy—such as digital marketing, SEO, or social media—to determine how effectively they resonate with the audience and where improvements could be made
- Identify new opportunities for engagement with existing clients, as well as new clients
- Maximise value by devising initiatives to encourage pre-existing customers to make another purchase or enlist another service

Brand

- Refine and shape your business' branding, to help you create an identity
- Control damage and manage brand in the event that your company's reputation takes a hit



the
brand

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?



SEO and Content Marketing

- SEO analysis, website analysis and competitor analysis
- Development of a content strategy and/or creation of search engine optimised content to boost site rankings and visibility
- Coordination of content platforms, including blog, landing pages, and website within a unified content strategy
- Outreach and digital PR support to get your brand in front of new audiences and gain backlinks



Social Media

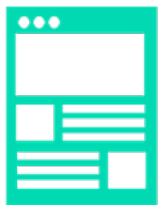
- Improvement of customer engagement across social media platforms, often by devising innovative social media campaigns
- Management of social media and email marketing campaigns, local marketing initiatives, and digital advertising
- Design and creation of new campaign designs

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?



Website Development

- Website development
(site structure analysis, development issue analysis and even a new website build)
- Project development



Conversion Optimisation

- Track and review conversions in order to benchmark current performance and provide improvement recommendations



Training and Development

- Provide training in online digital marketing for internal teams on a particular aspect
- Work directly with business leadership to develop management and marketing strategies
- 1-2-1 consultation

Agency, Consultant, or Consultancy?

Once you've decided what problem you are trying to solve and the type of marketing support you require, you will have to determine what type of provider you'd like to work with.

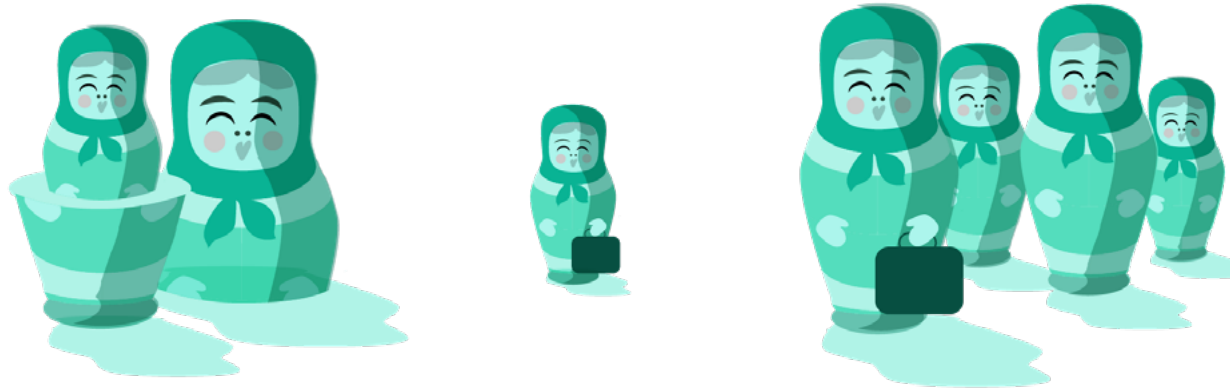
Although there are many—including business coaches and management consultants—let's take a look at the most common types of marketing support companies; an individual marketing consultant, a marketing consultancy firm, and a marketing agency.



What's the Difference Between a Marketing Consultant and a Marketing Consultancy Firm?

In the simplest of terms, a marketing consultant is an individual expert that companies tend to work with on a one-to-one basis. A marketing consultancy, on the other hand, refers to a company with multiple employees.

Although this may seem like a trivial difference, one is likely to be more suited to your business' individual needs than the other.



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Individual Marketing Consultants

So, should you choose a marketing consultant or a marketing consultancy firm?

It really does depend entirely on your circumstances and preference. For example, smaller companies with limited marketing support requirements, may feel more comfortable working with an individual freelance marketing consultant.

There are some notable advantages to doing so. First and foremost, you will only ever need to liaise with one person. Which allows you to develop a strong working relationship.

This person, having worked with you right from the start, will know your company intimately. As such, they will have access to all the information necessary to deliver their service. This means that you'll never have to worry about information not being communicated effectively, which is a consideration when working with a team.

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Secondly, a freelance marketing consultant will only work with a handful of clients at a time due to their capacity. Therefore enabling them to give you more of their attention. However, this does not necessarily mean that you will get more of their time than if you were to work with a marketing consultancy firm.

As one person, a marketing consultant is unable to delegate to other individuals and their time is very limited—this can prove to be a disadvantage if your marketing consultant fails to manage their workload effectively or takes on too many clients.

Keep in mind that an individual freelance marketing consultant may well be managing their own admin, accounting, and other responsibilities that a marketing consultancy firm would delegate or outsource. These administrative activities, if not properly balanced, can quickly overwhelm an individual's workload.

In other words, individual marketing

consultants have less flexibility with their time, which can cause time management problems. Because of this, businesses must be able to trust a marketing consultant to manage their time effectively and not overload their schedules, which could compromise the quality of their work.

A benefit of working with an individual marketing consultant is that they tend to have lower costs. This allows them to potentially deliver their service at a lower price.

It is worth noting, however, that freelance consultants have a broad pricing structure. For instance, if you find a consultant on a gig site like Upwork or Fiverr, you could be paying a pittance (though the quality of work is likely to be sub-par).

It is also worth noting that a lot of people become freelance marketing consultants by accident (e.g. a redundancy) rather than as their chosen career. There is a fundamental difference between someone starting out as a

marketing consultant and someone with years under their belt.

On the other side of the spectrum, you could be paying a premium (perhaps even significantly more than you'd pay to work with a marketing consultancy firm) if you choose a well-known freelance marketing consultant. Especially if they are well-known as a brand (e.g. Neil Patel).

A notable disadvantage of choosing to work with an individual marketing consultant is that they are unlikely to be an expert in every area of marketing. If you are looking for a comprehensive marketing service, this could be problematic.

On the other hand, if you are looking for support in a specific area (i.e., SEO), choosing a marketing consultant who specialises in this area and who comes highly recommended may be especially suitable.

Individual Marketing Consultants

Here's a summary of the pros and cons of working with an individual marketing consultant:

Pros:



One-to-one working relationship



Single point of contact



Fewer clients



Suitable for especially small companies with limited marketing support requirements



Fewer costs, which allows for a broad pricing structure, enabling you to choose a provider that suits your budget

Cons:



Less flexibility with their time



Unlikely to be an expert in every area of marketing



Unable to delegate to others if they become inundated with work



The market is saturated with low-quality marketing consultants (i.e, on Fiverr and Upwork)



Single point of failure (if a consultant is sick, nothing gets done)



One source of knowledge

Marketing Consultancy Firms

If you are a larger company with a range of marketing needs, working with a marketing consultancy firm is likely to be more appropriate than working with an individual marketing consultant.

A marketing consultancy often starts out as a freelance consultant business, which then grows with demand. This is exactly what happened with Murray Dare, for example.

With the right marketing consultancy, you can benefit from access to a range of specialists. For instance, the Murray Dare team has a dedicated team member for each area of marketing. As a result, this ensures that our clients get access to specialist advice and support directly from experts—yet maintains the one-on-one nature of dealing with a

marketing consultant.

Because marketing consultancies can outsource administrative activities, marketing consultancy teams are better able to focus on providing their service. This makes them more streamlined and minimises points of failure.

Marketing consultancy teams have more flexibility with their time because they are able to delegate and assign work to the most appropriate and experienced individual in the team.

As marketing consultancy teams are made up of multiple experts, they tend to be more strategic in their approach. Which means they are better placed to work towards long term goals. They also tend to invest more in their own processes and marketing; this means that they never

conduct work or provide services “on the fly”. As a result you can expect significantly more from them.

Another notable benefit of working with a marketing consultancy is increased accountability. If you have an issue with a team member, for example, you can raise this issue with the managing director of the company.

In contrast, individual marketing consultants are often the managing director and owner. Which creates very little opportunity to escalate problems and have them resolved.

A disadvantage of working with a marketing consultancy is that you may liaise with more than one individual. Provided that the team’s internal communications are effective, this shouldn’t cause any issues.

Some business owners may prefer a more one-on-one working relationship; if this is the case, but you are concerned that an individual marketing consultant won’t be able to meet the full scope of your needs, we recommend discussing communication methods with several consultants and marketing consultancies so you can effectively weigh up your options.





For example, small teams may have a single point of contact for discussing your marketing strategy—which may serve as a happy compromise.

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Marketing Consultancy Firms

Here's a summary of the pros and cons of working with a marketing consultancy firm:

Pros:

-  Suitable for companies with a range of marketing support requirements
-  Greater time flexibility
-  Greater range of expertise
-  Higher accountability
-  Larger output
-  Strategic and long-term
-  Better systems and procedures in place
-  Tried and tested

Cons:

-  Clients may have to liaise with multiple points of contact
-  Tend to be smaller than marketing agencies
-  Less tactical and reactionary
-  Fixed processes and methods of working

What's the Difference Between a Marketing Consultancy and a Marketing Agency?

If you're thinking about hiring a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy, then it's likely that you've considered a marketing agency as well.

But what's the difference?

We get this question a lot—primarily because there is some overlap between the two.

To put the difference between a marketing agency and marketing consultancy into terms everyone can understand, imagine that you're on a mission to get fit.

You have a few options.

For example, you could go on one of those meal replacement diets and take up the latest fitness fad—drinking shakes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and doing fifty squats a day. Other people are doing this, and it works for them.

This kind of off-the-shelf remedy may help you lose weight, and may even contribute to your level of fitness. But it doesn't provide a long-term or completely tailored solution.

This is like working with a marketing agency. Their solutions often work, but you have to fit within their program and play to the beat of their drum. You often don't get much control, either (i.e. you might have once a month communication in the form of a report, but nothing more).

Whilst this approach may be perfect, it doesn't take into account your body type, your schedule, your eating habits, your metabolism, your hobbies, or what's realistic for you in the long-term. As a result, your potential for success is extremely limited.

In other words, if you hate diet shakes, you are still going to receive diet shakes in the post because that's what you signed up for.

Alternatively, you could enlist a dietician and personal trainer which, in this analogy, represent a marketing consultancy.

These specialists will be able to tell you why you've struggled to get fit in the past and will tailor their solution to your individual circumstances. They will even teach you how to maintain your fitness and health without their help once you've reached your goals.

Yes, this second route is likely to cost you more in the short term and you will need to be more involved in the process. But with their expertise, you can create a foundation for long-term health capable of seeing you through the rest of your life.

Like a fixed diet and fitness plan, a marketing agency will work with a set toolkit, which they will apply to every client they work with.







A marketing consultancy or marketing

consultant, on the other hand, is able to apply their expertise to your individual business and create a tailored strategy designed to maximise growth.

A marketing consultant's strategy will be geared towards the long-term health and success of your business. This delivers greater value despite the initial upfront expense.

That being said, working with a marketing consultant or consultancy isn't necessarily the right choice for every business.

Whether a marketing consultant or a marketing agency is right for you will depend on a range of factors, which include:

-  The level of expertise required
-  Your budget
-  Any specific goals and timeframes you have
-  Your commitment to marketing
-  How involved you would like to be with the process
-  How tailored you would like the process to be

With these factors in mind, a marketing agency may be the better choice for your company under certain circumstances.

However, before making your final decision it is worth noting that there are certain pitfalls associated with working with a marketing agency that you should be aware of.

The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency

As you're probably aware, the Murray Dare team is made up of marketing consultants. We are a consultancy, not an agency—so, naturally, we're a little biased.

But our decision to set ourselves up as a marketing consultancy, instead of a marketing agency, was a very purposeful one.

To help you understand why we made this decision, and why we believe that consultancies are able to provide a better service under most circumstances, here are some insights into the way marketing agencies work.

If you've worked with a marketing agency before, you may recognise some of these issues.



The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency



1. Vested Interests

Firstly, it is worth noting that agencies tend to deliver pre-packaged, end-to-end marketing solutions. These solutions often cover everything from strategy to implementation and evaluation.

Because of this setup, it is in an agency's interest to establish a strategy that is geared towards their strengths as a company. As a result, they can succeed during the implementation stage. This means that an agency's plan will not be centred around your needs, but their capability.

In contrast, marketing consultancies don't usually offer fixed pricing for services, as their approach will vary according to their clients' needs. This allows them and your business greater flexibility; they can help you devise a tailored strategy, while affording you the option of implementing it yourself or enlisting the assistance of another provider.

This ensures that the advice of marketing consultancies is completely independent, unbiased, and free of ulterior motive.

The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency

2. One-Size-Fits-All

Marketing agencies rely heavily on economies of scale. This means that they don't have the time to invest in creating tailored strategies for each client they work with. In fact, this would only serve to reduce their profit margins.

Because of this, marketing agencies have a financial incentive to provide the minimum they can without attracting poor feedback.

One way to achieve this is to provide one-size-fits-all solutions.

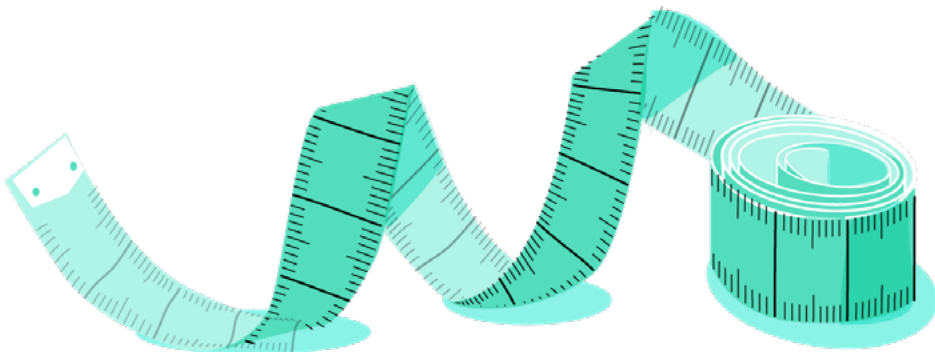
Off-the-shelf solutions require less foresight and planning, which makes them highly time-efficient for agencies.

While these packaged solutions can deliver results, they aren't bespoke.

As we all know, what works for one company does not necessarily work for another.

If you are selling furniture and want to focus on PPC, then it is logical to work with an agency who has similar clients, rather than a consultancy.

If you have a service that is fairly unique, a marketing agency solution may not work for you because what you are trying to achieve is different. You will need a marketing solution that is more involved, so a marketing consultancy is likely to be better suited to your needs.



The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency



3. Minimal Client involvement

If you are looking for a close working relationship with your marketing support provider, then a marketing agency is likely to fall short in this area.

Marketing agencies tend to take on more clients than marketing consultancies. Therefore, they aren't able to give each client the same level of attention and time.

This means that businesses should expect minimal involvement when they enlist the services of a marketing agency. For some business owners, who would rather outsource areas of their marketing and have nothing more to do with it, this may be ideal.

As a general rule of thumb, the bigger the company, the more suitable a marketing agency will be to a business that wants to outsource their marketing. This is because senior management becomes less involved with the day-to-day marketing activities as the business increases in size.

The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency



4. Short-Termist

Marketing agencies are all about using a set toolkit to get results. But they do not provide their clients with the tools needed to attain long-term success.

Most marketing agencies provide short-term, off-the-shelf initiatives that don't address the foundational elements of a successful marketing strategy.

A marketing consultancy, on the other hand, can help you redefine your business from the ground up. As a result, every component is purpose-built for long-term success.

They also share far more, as you are working in collaboration, which means they will tell you *exactly* what they are doing and *why*.

What This Means For Your Business

As a consultancy, many of the clients we work with have enlisted the services of a marketing agency in the past. Despite ample investment, they have each been disappointed by the return.

This does not necessarily mean that each of these marketing agencies was “bad” at what they did. As we see it, the marketing agency model is at fault, because it creates an environment where vested interests thrive and exist in direct opposition to providing value.

The disgruntled business owners we speak to are often looking for an approach unique to them after getting the sense that although the agency they worked with was good, they really didn’t understand what their individual business was trying to achieve.

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Should You Choose a Marketing Consultant or a Marketing Agency?

While we understand that this guide seems to have taken a fairly negative view on marketing agencies, we recognise that there are some instances in which a marketing agency may be better suited to your needs than a marketing consultant.

One of the main benefits of working with a marketing agency is that they allow you to wash your hands of areas of marketing you find particularly stressful or time-consuming.

If a path is well trodden, then a marketing agency is likely to be perfect for you. In these cases, we would even recommend choosing a marketing agency over Murray Dare.

This will allow you to focus on areas of your business that you find more enjoyable. Or that you consider to be a higher priority.

If the idea of outsourcing your marketing and putting it out of your mind is appealing, then a marketing agency can provide a viable—albeit generic—solution. This is ideal for business owners who don't want to be especially ambitious with their marketing.

In contrast, a marketing consultant or consultancy will want to spend time with you (often in lengthy discussion). This way, they can truly understand your business, your priorities, and your customers.

Though more time-intensive, a marketing consultant's final solution will be tailored to your business' strengths and weaknesses, your goals, and your current position within the market.

Most importantly, it will have a far higher likelihood of delivering success and growth for your company—saving you money in the long-run.





Chapter 2

Do you even need a marketing consultant?

Should you do your own marketing?
Do you even need a marketing consultant?

Sadly, there are no simple answers to these questions.

The truth is that there are a multitude of factors that contribute to the decision to enlist the services of a marketing consultant—the most important of which is your business' individual circumstances.

As a general rule, the types of businesses we tend to work with fall into one of the following four categories

Each of these types of businesses will have different marketing requirements. If you are a start-up, for instance, it's likely that you've wondered whether you can do your own marketing—saving yourself the initial cost and hassle of finding the right consultant.

Or, if you already have a marketing function or marketing support of some kind, you may be asking yourself if your team has enough experience and expertise.

If you've had poor experiences with agencies, you may be wondering where to turn to next.

With these types of businesses and circumstances in mind, this chapter has been written to help you determine whether you need a marketing consultant by addressing two key questions; can you do your own marketing, and should you?

This guide has been written for businesses looking to improve their marketing, but that lack a dedicated and comprehensive team of marketers.

Like it or not, business leaders are the drivers behind marketing decisions. The buck stops with them and they have the most to gain (and to lose) from marketing.

That's a hefty and often unnerving responsibility.



Start ups or new businesses



Businesses without a marketing function



Businesses with marketing support, but not at a senior level



Businesses who have had bad experiences with agencies

Should You Do Your Own Marketing and Do You Even Need A Marketing Consultant?

We wrote this guide to give business leaders a helping hand. To inform the decision-making process for leaders who are feeling cautious in their pursuit of growth.

Although all decisions involve some element of risk, we hope that this guide empowers you to pick the right solution for your company—and, perhaps more importantly, we wrote this guide to help you avoid choosing the wrong solution. Which can have a monumental impact on your business.

This chapter of the guide will address an illusion surrounding the nature of marketing. One that leads many business leaders to believe that they can do their own marketing—often at great cost to their business.

Having examined the question “can you do your own marketing?”, we will then take a look at a more pressing question; should you?

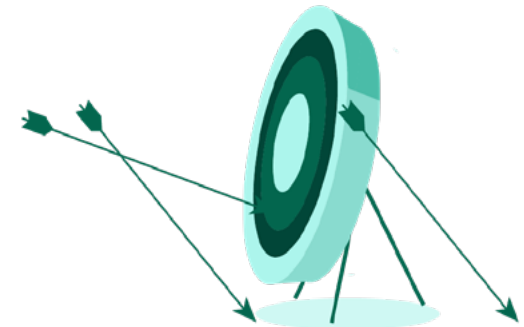
Following this chapter, we’ll also consider some examples of great marketing campaigns—as well as some failed marketing campaigns that have gone down in history.

These examples will demonstrate the complexity of marketing and the skills required to make it work, and showcase the monumental risks associated with poor marketing.

So, let’s get started.

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There are certain things that you either can or can't do, while other things exist on a spectrum of ability.

Let's take a backflip as an example. This is something that you most likely cannot do (hats off to you if you can, sorry for doubting you).

On the other hand, activities that sit on a spectrum of ability, are fundamentally different by nature—and yet we often still approach them with the same black and white attitude of can and can't.

Cooking, writing, and singing are a few common examples of activities that the vast majority of us “can” do, in the loosest sense of the word. Almost everyone can toast bread, string words together on a page, and sing a song—however out of tune.

With activities like these, it is not a question of “can” or “can't”. Though

most can cook, they can't necessarily cook like Gordon Ramsay. Though most can write, very few can write like Dickens. We certainly won't be joining a choir anytime soon.

Marketing falls on the spectrum of ability. As a result, it is completely dependent on you or your team's knowledge, experience and the context.

For example, you may have loads of experience in one or a few areas of marketing. But it is unlikely that you are going to be a master at everything.

After all, you wouldn't be reading this if you were brilliant at everything. We'd likely be calling you, instead.

So instead of asking “can I?”, a more appropriate question would be “should I?”

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Marketing is an area which most businesses tend to approach without a proper, robust, and informed plan in place.

This means that marketing plans are often reactive and driven by speculation.

Moreover, the ease of getting started with marketing often lulls business leaders into a false sense of security.

However, just like you can easily fudge a home DIY job, you can also fudge your marketing. And with potentially colossal consequences

- **Want a website?** It can be fudged
- **Do some social media?** Yep, I will have fudge with that
- **Write an article?** Banana and fudge sundae please

But there does come a point when fudging things up becomes less of a minor inconvenience and more of a significant problem. Especially once you get off the ground, want better results and want to develop a proper brand.

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It is at this point that you realise that whilst marketing is easy to start, doing it well is significantly harder than you initially thought.

Business leaders readily outsource activities that fall firmly within the realm of “can’t” for their team, like accounting or coding for example.

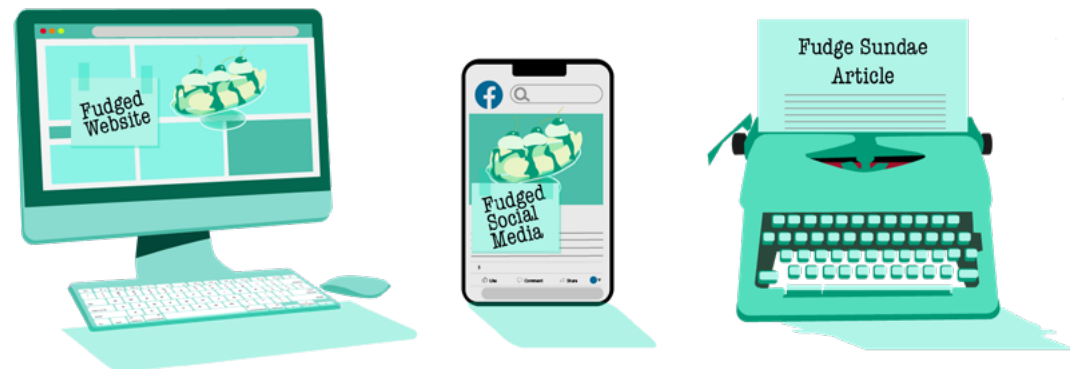
And yet, the skills that exist on the spectrum of ability—copywriting and marketing, let’s say—business leaders frequently decide to take upon themselves.

Why?

For some, doing so is an attempt to achieve cost-savings. After all, having become accustomed to wearing many hats, it may at first seem sensible.

For others, they are not sure who to turn to or, more importantly, who to trust.

Then there are those who feel that outsourcing is expensive, despite wanting to maximise results.



Overestimating Your Ability, Underestimating The Effort



It is very easy to overestimate your own ability when you know that you can do something, at least to a certain extent. However, the onus is on you to determine the limitations of that capability.

And it is *especially* easy to overestimate ability when faced with the prospect of a short-term benefit, like *perceived* cost-savings. “Perceived” because, in reality, taking on the responsibility for marketing without the appropriate level of expertise and experience can be the opposite of cost-effective.

From outside the industry looking in, marketing activities may not seem especially complicated; write a blog, post to social media, create a Facebook advertisement.

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Although seemingly simple, this is a surface-level understanding of marketing that:

- Simplifies solutions to the lowest common denominator
- Means that work is often subpar and rushed
- Overlooks the need for a broader marketing strategy
- Achieves average results, because you weren’t fully aware of what effective marketing entailed



Simplifies solutions to the lowest
common denominator



Means that work is often below
par and rushed



Overlooks broader
marketing strategies



Achieves average
results

That being said, if you are a person who truly values marketing and views it as an essential extension of yourself and your business—and you are willing to learn and commit yourself to the effort involved—then you may be suited to doing your own marketing.

Overestimating Your Ability, Underestimating The Effort

If you do choose to do your own marketing, or expand on your current marketing function without external support. Then it is crucial that you dedicate yourself to the learning process and acknowledge its importance. No cutting corners.

Keep in mind, however, that the learning process won't be without its pitfalls. Perfecting a business' approach to marketing can be a bumpy road if you're new to it. So expect things to go wrong and try not to be disheartened. Recognise the value in mistakes by learning from them, and iterate your process until the pitfalls become less frequent.

If you can afford to make mistakes, are willing to make marketing a priority, and can dedicate the necessary time to hone your marketing strategy, then success is on the horizon.

There are, of course, some obvious benefits to doing your marketing yourself. After all, no one knows your business like you do and no one cares more about your business than you.

But if this isn't you, and if you can't afford mistakes or find the time to make your marketing a priority, then the wiser choice may be to outsource some or all of your marketing—at least until you have reached a point where you are able to create your own in-house team or take a more internalised approach.

In marketing, the journey towards success is littered with obstacles—particularly if you're committed to traversing it alone—but what's important is the destination.

Once your marketing starts driving real business growth, you'll thank yourself for making the trip. Before we outline the signs that your company might need a marketing consultant and address the potential benefits—first, let's take a look at what's behind great marketing with some examples of both successful marketing and failed marketing initiatives.



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Chapter 3

Examples of Great and Poor Marketing

So, what can we learn from the success or failure of other businesses' marketing campaigns?

The short answer? A lot.

We have found that the best way to understand what goes into great marketing is to study examples of it. To that end, here are some of our team's favourite examples of mind-blowing marketing.

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Before you read on, it is important that we preface these examples by acknowledging that some of these companies are big name brands. They may have massive marketing budgets—but we urge you not to be discouraged by this.

We are firm believers that size doesn't matter (wink, wink) quite as much as many would have us believe (and yes, we're still talking about budget).



Whether a marketing budget is in the millions or the hundreds, the fundamental tenets of great marketing remain the same:



1. Be clear about who you are

to do

2. Be clear about what you are want to do



3. Know your audience



4. Analyse and predict trends



5. Know your strengths and weaknesses



6. Know the strengths and weaknesses of your competitors



7. Subvert to stand out



8. Be bold

10011

9. Data is key to decision making



10. Context is everything—understand your environment



11. To that end, review and improve



12. Plan for the worst, expect the best

Think About Connections, Not Budgets

When we think about great marketing, we always begin with a desire to stand out in a crowded room.

We at Murray Dare think that any business can make a significant dent in their market. Regardless of their size and budget.

In this chapter, you will discover that just as big-budget marketing campaigns can achieve success, they can also result in massive failure—proving that it's not the size that matters, but what you do with it (honestly, still talking about budget, so get your mind out of the gutter!).

Here are a few gems we love.

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DeadHappy's Messaging & Branding

DeadHappy is a life insurance company that has cultivated significant popularity in recent years. Despite starting out as a small player in a market monopolised by brands like Aviva, Direct Line, and comparison sites like Compare the Market.

DeadHappy is an exceptional example of subversive marketing. Because it applies humour to a subject that we can all unanimously agree is pretty bleak: death.

Here's a snippet of their website content:

We've created a whole new life insurance product, because traditional life insurance policies just aren't good enough any more.

We've also created a way to help folks plan for what happens when they shuffle off this mortal coil. We call these deathwishes.

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So, what do you want to happen when you die? Do you want Rick Astley to sing at your funeral, a bronze statue of yourself for the garden or perhaps send your mates on holiday? Your call.

Nobody likes making plans for their own death. It's a generally depressing experience that many of us perceive as an unwelcome obligation. Which makes life insurance an especially tricky product to sell. By inviting your audience to think about their own death, you're setting yourself up for failure.

DeadHappy makes no effort to avoid the presence of death in the product they are selling, as many life insurance providers do. But instead, embraces it fully and with a dark sense of humour to boot.

By taking a risk, subverting the dominant market approach, and embracing humour, DeadHappy have created a genuinely stand-out brand. One that has been especially successful on social media platforms.

With their modern approach, they have also effectively targeted a market demographic that rarely even considers the prospect of life insurance: millennials and adults in their early twenties.

<https://deadhappy.com>



Lemonade's Website Design

On the subject of insurance, Lemonade is also worth mentioning.

Lemonade's strength is in its website design and branding, which take a minimalistic approach that is simple and positive. With its cartoon-like sketches, Lemonade keeps the tone of the website light. As well as avoiding the use of bright graphics that could distract from important content.

Lemonade's design is largely monochromatic. When it does use colour, it features bright pink in splashes that draw your attention to essential calls-to-action.

Super simple. Highly effective.

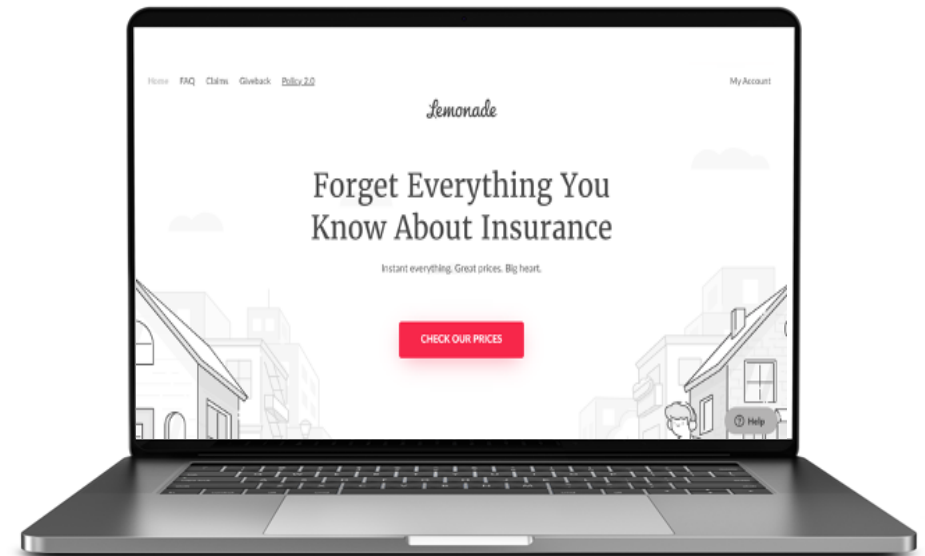
Why did Lemonade take this route?

This branding decision was grounded in audience insights, and Lemonade's awareness of its own strengths. When choosing an insurance provider, most of us are looking for simplicity and ease. We want a provider we can get set up with quickly and maintain with minimal effort.

Lemonade knows this and has created a site that reflects the simplicity they promise to provide; no flashy images or an overload of information—just a clean and authentic product, mirrored in their branding.

<https://www.lemonade.com/de/en>

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The Always “Like A Girl” Campaign

This highly influential campaign helped Always successfully overcome the challenge of increasing the popularity of their feminine-hygiene brand among a young audience.

This campaign was devised after Always lost much of its relevance with the 16 to 24 year old demographic.

While at face value the “Like A Girl” campaign might seem like a stroke of luck or a spark of genius, it was in fact grounded in extensive market research and analysis.

The Always team discovered that more than 50% of young girls quit playing sports when they hit puberty, as a result of a confidence crisis, which was the inspiration for this campaign.

This campaign’s achievements were extensive.

With their keen, data-driven insights into their audience, Always not only bolstered their popularity, but assisted in redefining the public’s perception of the phrase “like a girl”—firmly establishing their brand as one of female empowerment.

But why was this campaign so successful?

By understanding the thinking behind the “Like A Girl” campaign, we can gain key insights into why certain campaigns work and why others don’t.

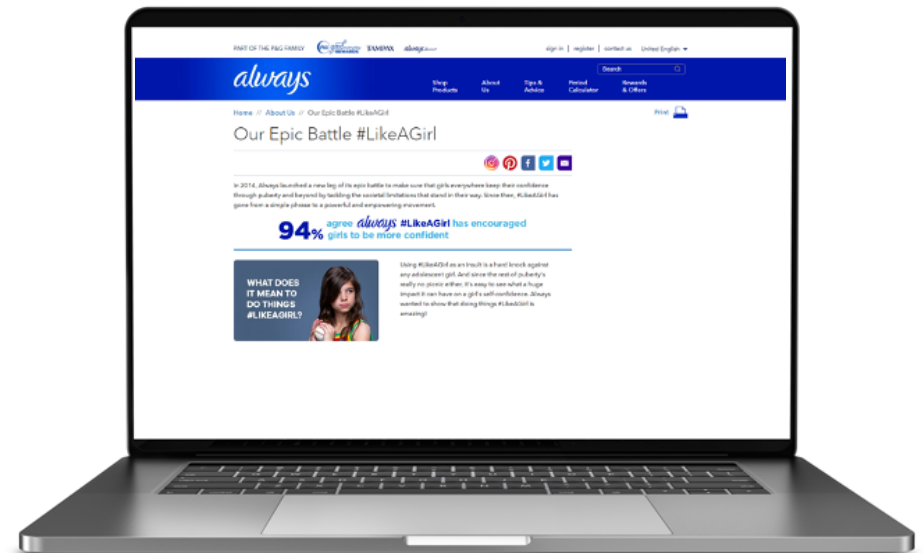
Primarily, the “Like A Girl” campaign succeeded because it subverted the widespread, but damaging notion that being a girl translates to weakness and inability.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjQJBjWYDTs&feature=youtu.be>

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By addressing how and where this misguided assumption originated, Always undermined it. This in turn established Always as a pioneer of activism, a cultural disruptor, and as a company reinventing femininity for both their customers and their product.

Always’ originality sparked a discussion, which increased the visibility of their campaign.



Spotify's "Thanks 2016, It's Been Weird" Campaign

Spotify's global campaign, which paid homage to the year 2016, was a monumental success—and it was entirely data-driven.

Despite fears that the increasing use of big data would be the nail in the coffin for creativity in marketing, Spotify was able to use big data innovatively to create real connection and a sense of shared experience.

In this campaign, Spotify used data on listening habits to personalise their approach to customers and mirror popular culture.

Spotify used humour to unite consumers behind a single experience that everyone had shared in; 2016. And in a year where division was rife, the emphasis on communal experience was well-received.

<https://www.spotify.com/uk/>

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Pic's Peanut Butter Content Campaign

Pic's Peanut Butter have a particular aptitude for content, and this is a strength they have taken full advantage of across both social media and their website recipe page.

On their recipe page, Pic's Peanut Butter publishes recipes in which their products feature. The recipes are professionally photographed and very creative. Thus, establishing Pic's Peanut Butter as a unique and authoritative source of content for lovers of baking and cooking.

Their recipe page provides the ideal conversion point for site visitors, as craving becomes a purchase.

What we love about Pic's Peanut Butter's approach to content is that it isn't trying to sell peanut butter, per se. But the limitless recipes that can be made with their peanut butter and other products.

In devising their content strategy, Pic's Peanut Butter recognised the limitation of their product; it only works as part of a wider recipe.

By emphasising the vast number of delicious recipes that can be made with their products, they lean into their strengths and effectively compensate for their weakness.

We challenge you to [visit their recipe](#) page without your mouth watering.

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Smol's Messaging

Smol's laundry detergent sums up its unique selling point in just seven words, which provides us with everything we need to know about how Smol differs from other laundry detergent providers.

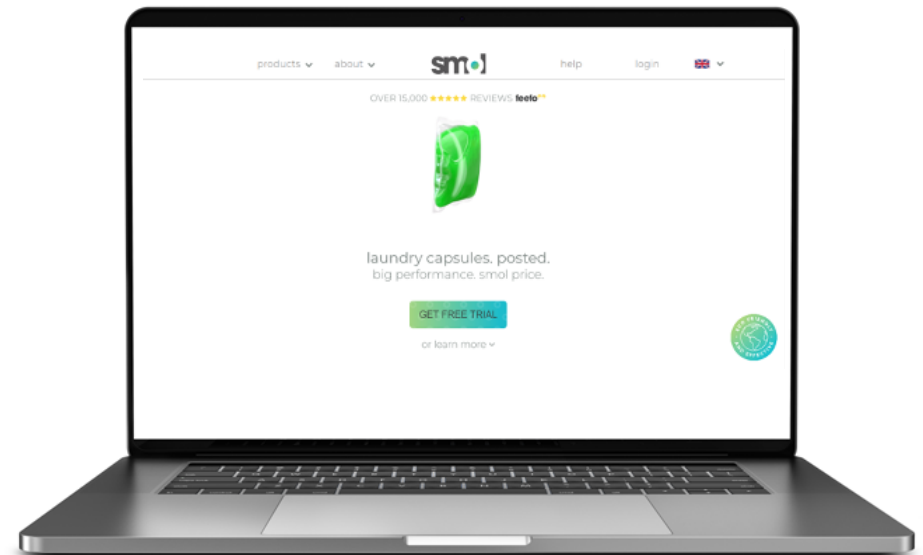
Simple, clean, and effective. Smol does not mince words or attempt to persuade you that their product is anything more than what it is: convenient, powerful, and budget-friendly.

Smol's messaging makes it clear that they know themselves and their audience. Their value proposition is crystal clear and they are boldly taking on massive supermarket chains by cutting out the middleman and delivering straight to the customer's door.

<https://smolproducts.com/>

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laundry capsules. posted.
big performance. smol price.



Ecologi's Gamification

Ecologi is a company that offsets carbon emissions on behalf of its customers, for a small monthly subscription charge. As an individual or business, you can neutralise your impact on the environment. Therefore allowing you to live a fully climate positive lifestyle.

Ecologi gamifies the experience of mitigating your environmental impact by generating a personal, animated forest on your profile page. This forest shows the age and location of the trees they've planted on your behalf across the globe. As the trees get older, they turn from seedlings into full trees.

The Ecologi platform rewards you with badges for your involvement (i.e. "100 trees planted", and "1 year climate positive"). Ecologi also shows you the equivalent of your carbon footprint reduction in terms of number of long-haul flights, metres squared of sea ice saved, and number of miles driven in a car.

Being able to visualise your impact in real terms is really motivating, and you can even benefit from having extra trees added to your forest when you refer someone new.

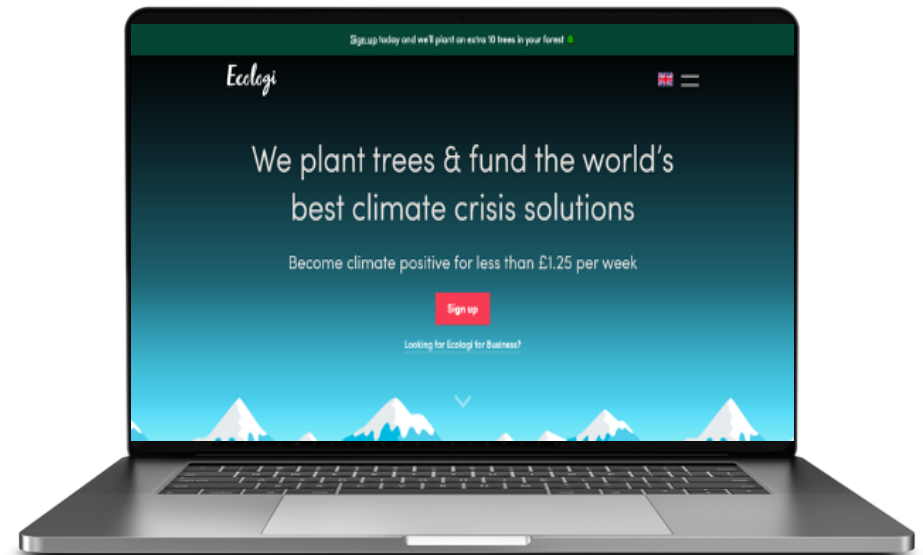
This approach is so effective that when we stumbled across Ecologi, we signed up ourselves!

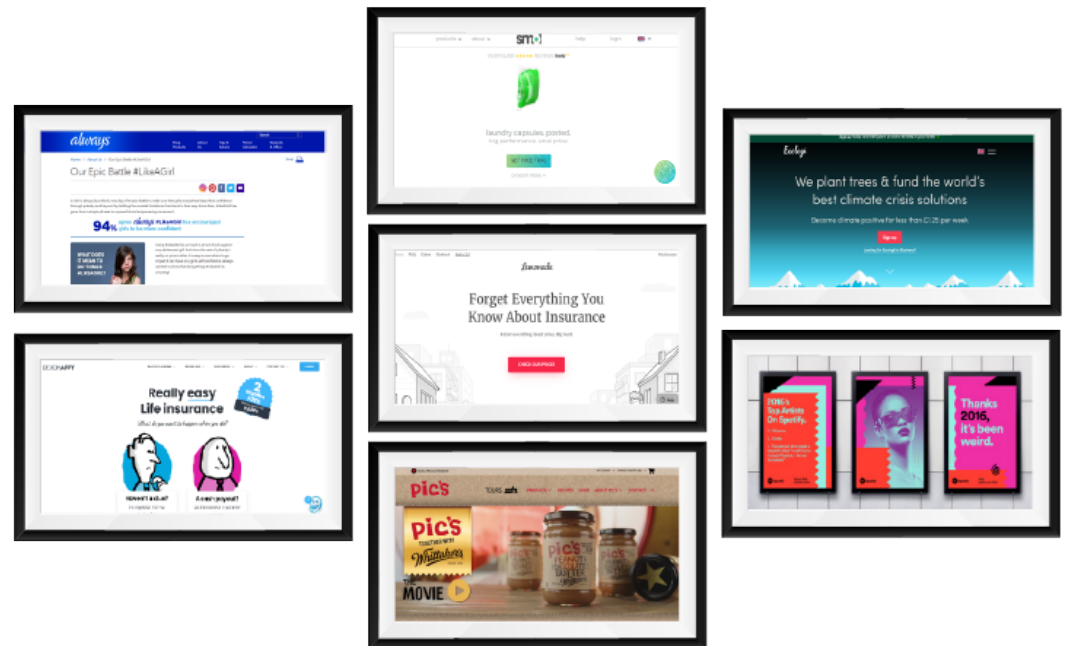
Being able to download our climate positive certificates each month and seeing the details of the projects we've supported gives us a real sense of pride and achievement.

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This gamified approach to giving is an extremely effective marketing initiative that turns parting with your money into a rewarding and high-value experience for businesses and individuals alike.

Check out [our forest](#) to see for yourself.





As these examples demonstrate, great marketing doesn't happen overnight and it isn't dumb luck.

These companies know exactly who they are, what they are trying to achieve and how to cut through the noise of their prospective markets. Their clarity is fundamental to their success.

This clarity, supported by being innovative, data-driven and rooted in an informed understanding of the audience is a great recipe for business success.

We haven't chosen these companies because they are big and spent a fortune on marketing; we have chosen them because they are bold and trying to break through in a market with established competitors.

They have to be different and, because of this, they have to innovate.

You don't have to be big to be successful. Creating successful initiatives requires experience, expertise, dedication, and a boldness to move against the grain.

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The Risks of Poor Marketing

Although even the most experienced of us can stumble from time to time, experience remains the only reliable way to learn, improve and then mitigate the chances of future failures.

In other words, good marketing (and good business) is sometimes more about your ability to roll with the punches, and continuously iterate, than it is about anything else.

Seemingly overnight successes rarely happen overnight, and are usually the result of years spent refining and improving.

The risks of a failed marketing strategy or campaign can be difficult to fully grasp. Particularly if you're a small business new to marketing.

That is why the best marketing strategies are built to be tested and adaptable, so that they can be modified as their context and environment changes.

To demonstrate the impact poor marketing can have on a business, we have put together a list of some of the most notorious failed marketing campaigns.

Please Note: We have not mentioned any small businesses in the following examples, because we don't like to take aim at new businesses as they are building and learning. We punch up, instead.

There is an infinite number of ways to fail at marketing, and each of these ways is a hazard or pitfall ready to trip you up.

Risks, failures and hazards of bad marketing



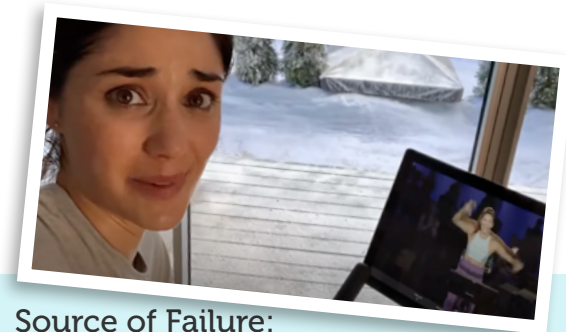
The Risks of Poor Marketing

Peloton's Gender Stereotypes

In 2019, Peloton released a christmas advertisement featuring a husband giving his wife a Peloton exercise bike as a gift. The wife happened to be very slim. Unfortunately for Peloton, many viewers perceived this advertisement as playing into gender stereotypes.

As a time when the female body empowerment movement was gaining more traction, the advert went down very poorly. As a result, Peloton's value went down by \$1.5bn pretty much overnight and shares dropped 9% by the end of the first day alone...and by another 6% by lunchtime the following day.

This advert failed simply because Peloton failed to understand their audience and cultural sensitivities that were especially prevalent at the time of release.



Source of Failure:
Playing into stereotypes

The Impact:
*Significant drop in shares
and lost customers*



<https://youtu.be/ijof8uw4OHs>

The Risks of Poor Marketing

Bloomingdale's Date Rape Advert

In 2015, Bloomingdales launched an advert that featured a man staring at a laughing woman, with the caption reading, "Spike your best friend's eggnog when they're not looking."

Yikes. To say that this was a poor choice of words would be an understatement.

Needless to say, customers were far from happy with this advertisement. Which damaged the company's brand image significantly.



Source of Failure:

Oversight and carelessness

The Impact:

*Dissatisfied customers
and damaged brand*

bloomingdale's

The Risks of Poor Marketing

Pepsi's Kendall Jenner Advert

Having mentioned Pepsi, the famous Kendall Jenner advert launched by Pepsi can't go unmentioned.

This is an example of a marketing blunder that seems to be becoming more common. Or at least is gaining more visibility in the media.

In 2017, Pepsi made a misguided attempt to connect with political activism in their advertisements. In an advert starring Kendall Jenner, Pepsi featured a group of young people protesting in the streets.

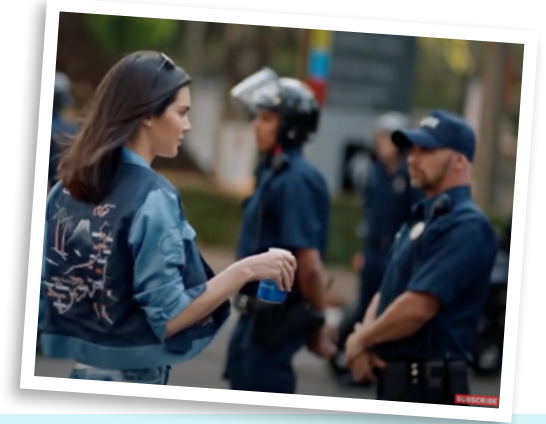
The subject of their protest or rally is ambiguous, with generic picket signs being held up reading "Love" and "Join the Conversation".

Kendall Jenner leaves a photoshoot to join the rally. The advertisement concludes with Kendall Jenner handing a police officer, who is blocking the path of the rally, a can of Pepsi.

This advert attracted a lot of negative attention and anger, as Pepsi was accused of leveraging social justice movements for corporate gain.

With many modern businesses choosing to take political stances on important subjects, it is crucial that these subjects are approached with authenticity and appropriate gravitas.

Using a social movement in an advert designed to sell a product or service is a very dangerous line to walk. In fact, it should be carefully considered and reviewed before it's embarked upon.



Source of Failure:

Approached sensitive subjects carelessly and out of touch with public opinion

The Impact:

Customer outrage, lost customers, and diminished brand



<https://youtu.be/bTivpgMkGKA>

The Risks of Poor Marketing

What Do These Examples Prove?

All of the examples listed above share one thing in common—they were needless.

Although it is inevitable that mistakes will be made from time to time, all of these failures could have been avoided with the right research, analysis, and insight on the part of the marketing teams responsible.

Effective, experienced, and careful marketers can spot a political landmine from a mile off, have taken the time to understand their audience, rely on data insights, and know from experience the level of risk involved with each venture.

We think that the core issue with all of these campaigns is that they fail to address long-term goals, fail to know and connect with their audience, and fail to establish their company identity. When brands try to please everyone,

they end up pleasing no one.

With the right marketing partner, you can mitigate these risks and ensure that every step your business takes is considered, clear and aligned to your long-term goals.



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