



Made to

Market

Marketing in a
World Focused
on Sales

Sarah
STAHL



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Introduction

I don't know anyone who grew up saying, "I'm going to be a marketer one day!" When I was growing up, I couldn't even utter an articulate answer to the question, "Who do you want to be when you grow up?" I was born in Nashua, New Hampshire but grew up in a Florida household that fostered zero forethought into what adulthood might bring. I had no clue what I wanted to do when I left home. In fact, most of my childhood memories are spotty, and that's probably for the best.

What do I remember? Raking!

As a pre-teen with four siblings who shared a three-bedroom, one-and-a-half bath rental with our parents, I spent my summers raking. You may not believe that a Florida yard had enough to keep me busy all summer, but then you've never had pine trees! A family of seven living on the poverty line didn't offer many options for extracurricular activities when school was out.

No school meant you could find me in the yard under the hot Florida sun. Often, I dared to imagine someone actually acknowledging the work I'd put into the half-acre lot where our woodsy neighborhood ended. But no such reality ever unfolded. Still, I believed in my mantra with all my heart: "The better job I do, the better the reward I'll get!"

So, I worked harder, raked longer, and even tried to find free ways to make the yard – sparkle.

Nobody ever stopped by to recognize the "world's best yard," but for some reason, I never stopped believing that it would happen – someday. And so, my relentless passion and reckless abandon over what I thought possible was born!

As I grew older, my relentless passion shifted from yard manicuring to business, something else I knew absolutely nothing about. I was not the girl playing with dolls and dreaming of my wedding day. When I wasn't raking, I was the girl building forts and dreaming of owning a bed and breakfast. As it turned out, a natural inclination for business is the perfect accompaniment for the marketing profession.

Read more in the book...



Chapter One

WHAT IS MARKETING ANYWAY?

Think about how multi-faceted we are as humans. We've got these quirks and preferences that shape who we are and define our place in the world. Consider a marketer's traits. If you have a boundless curiosity around business, are fascinated by the nuances of human psychology, have a culturally active and accepting brain, an often-smiling face accompanied by exceptional communication and analytical skills, you may be destined for marketing. If I just described you, and you're not sure what you want to be when you grow up, let me assure you, you'll make a great marketer!

We know we're not supposed to judge people based on first impressions. But we all do it! And when we do, we get it wrong most of the time because we lack insight into all of that person's dimensions, the parts that make them whole. But as we develop a relationship with them and peel back the layers, we begin to realize what's beneath the surface. We have a better sense of why they're indispensably valued in the world and deserve to be treated as such. You know how when you fall in love with somebody, and you think they're the best thing since sliced bread and you can't fathom why the rest of the world doesn't see what you see?

That's how marketers look at people.

It's not a matter of "They aren't like me; I'm out of here!" It's, "If I could understand them better, my life and the life of those around me could improve." Marketers typically have a heart and soul to serve others and care deeply for their co-workers, customers, and communities. So, time and effort are often spent on knowing people better with an open mind to improve humanity in some way.

These empathetic souls dedicate themselves to organizations for one reason: to bridge the human-to-business connectivity gap. Without them, business will always suffer. Why? Because business is about people, and marketers are trained to skillfully communicate while explicitly influencing their fellow humans.

What is Marketing?

Literally, take a moment to write down some of your ideas about marketing.

If you had a hard time pinning down a definition, welcome to the crowd! It's no surprise that the concept of marketing is elusive. Its lack of structural standards is a cause for confusion in its own space. For this reason, we need to retrain ourselves to approach marketing from the foundational construct that originally built the industry to function in valuable ways we've now strayed from. That's what this book is all about!

Understanding why we market first requires us to understand what marketing is. I like to work on solid ground to build strong foundations, so let's first point out what it's not – to rule out those pesky perceptions that cloud "real" marketing.

Marketing is NOT:

- Sales
- Hard
- Customer Service
- Graphic Arts
- Crisis Management
- Senior Management's personal publicity machine
- Human Resources
- A quick fix for failing products
- Sales! Yes, it's important enough to mention twice on the same list.

Let's face it, to the average businessperson, marketing equals promotional advertisement and anything that resembles it. But, to better understand the original philosophies behind marketing, think about the movie *Around the World in 80 Days*. The 1956 story is about a Victorian Englishman who bets that he can circumnavigate the globe using new steamships and railways in just 80 days. Neat, right? That's marketing. It used an influencer-based public relations stunt that sold cutting-edge travel options to the tech-leery consumer.

Think Harvard Business Review for more marketing foundations. A branded product solely owned and operated by Harvard University began in 1922 as an elite microeconomics journal for students and business professionals. Today, it's one of the most widely known and well-respected business periodicals in the world. Responsible not just for an additional revenue stream but also for leveraging the school as one of the most elite business colleges known to man.

Both resulted in a sales increase that altered the construct of the world's economy in life-changing ways. However, the act of selling did not make those stunts marketing; it was the long-term, consistent, consumer touchpoints that developed reliability- resulting in magnificent outcomes.

“When you take the burden to sell out of the equation, marketing thrives, and business multiplies.”

Sales is NOT Marketing

Sales is typically defined as the exchange of a commodity for money. It's the closing of a deal, resulting in a financial interchange. Sales is the more intimate interaction responsible for brokering relationships with potential clients with the goal of providing a solution that will eventually lead to a sale -- the customer's personal "handler," if you will.

Marketing is NOT Sales

Marketing involves calculated storytelling to create communication outlets that connect customers, clients, partners and influence societal mindsets. Marketing-focused communications influence consumer spending, and enhance a company's reputation through target audience identification. Communication with a defined audience is then consistent, professional, and ongoing. In short, it's the process of getting people interested in the goods and services that may be sold to them at another point in time.

I lead the horse to water. – Marketing
I cause the horse to drink it. - Sales

It's marketing and sales, not marketing or sales, or even marketing as sales. I certainly don't want to widen the professional divide, as both departments need each other fiercely! But somewhere, the marketing industry lost clarity. How? Well, if I had to choose a single reason why marketing has lost its effectiveness, clout, and respectability over the years, it's because marketing has been grossly confused with sales, and we're not really doing a whole lot about it.

Now that we know what marketing isn't, let's talk about what it is.

- A clear and well-communicated benefit.
- Advocating for a well-defined three-dimensional customer.
- The helpful tasks your organization engages in to provide value to your community and your customers.
- Respect and relationships built with customers.
- The systematically thought out and calculated steps that lead customers through an on-boarding process.
- The story told about your brand's identity and how it relates to your customer's pain points.
- Distinct and defined business processes that lead to growth and credibility over a long period of time.
- Making sense of data that leads to clarified business decisions and long-term growth.
- Visual creativity applied consistently across all brand pieces.
- The ongoing message about a customer's journey.
- The ongoing management of profitable relationships.
- instant brand recognition.

Here's what the tangibles look like:

- A brand kit,
- A website,
- A corporate magazine,
- Newsletters,
- Brochures,
- Direct mailers,
- Posters,
- Business cards,
- Signage,
- Social media content,
- Inbound marketing communications,
- A podcast,
- A YouTube channel,
- Digital banners
- Even a book.

That's right; I'm marketing to you right now! Not to be confused with selling, I'm not trying to get you to buy anything; you've already done that. I am, however, building trust, earning your respect and a place in your mind where you may consider me a knowledgeable voice in this space. Maybe, one day you'll reach out to ask a question or offer me consulting work or even a job. Maybe I'll just become a trusted marketing resource you tap into from time to time during your own career.

That's fine. That's marketing! Marketing is what you say and how you say it, when and where you explain what you provide, and why people should take notice. Okay, not a succinct definition but clear at least. That may not be the only reason you've committed to a few hours of interim education and honest storytelling, but I can promise you that all the frustration you feel over marketing is why I decided to tackle this topic. I share those frustrations with you, and I want to do something about it!

Talk About Changes!

The business world has changed! Covid-19 exposed the cracks and sped up the need to innovate, and it's way past time for marketing to play catch-up! It's time to realize and leverage the full potential of marketing's hibernating talent, foundational structure, and power to transform businesses across the globe.

You've already seen it in action. Think about brands like Coke, Amazon, Geico, Starbucks, or Apple. How did you feel when you read those names? If you can articulate a feeling, you are a recipient of the power of brand marketing. Unfortunately, the number-one holdup in creating an equally powerful brand presence for most business owners today is a total misdirection of long-term marketing focus.

The transformation process starts with taking marketing seriously in your own organization. Have you tried to lose weight recently? If you have, how committed were you to the long-term consistency needed to see noticeable results? Or did you try some new wonder program that you quit a month later due to lack of results? Marketing is not a quick fix to an intermittent sales dip. And wonder marketing will not provide the fix you're seeking. It's the long-term management of profitable relationships that engages the brand to elicit the buying feelings that Coke, Amazon, Geico, Starbucks, or Apple can conjure.

We all know a thing or two about the complexity of what it takes to see lasting and authentic weight-loss results. The same thinking applies to marketing. So, if you haven't already started your organization's marketing transformation process, you're already way behind the curve. The good news is you can still catch up! In this book, we'll cut through the confusion and chaos preventing you from fostering continuous organizational growth.

Readers and Principles

I had two types of readers in mind when I wrote this book:

- **Marketers** - New and seasoned marketers who want technical, strategic answers that lead to becoming a talented and respected career professional who can account for tangible growth in your organization. In this book, I discuss what you didn't learn in school and answer the questions to fill the gaps that may be preventing you from moving forward.

I address the changing industry and how to better understand its roots, including how to stay ahead of the evolution process. I address ethics, analytics, the skills gap, and strategic errors that dilute the industry's ability to accomplish true marketing potential. Then, I lay out essential basic skills all marketers should possess now – most of which revolve around an interconnected and measurable storytelling and content stacking process.

- **Employers** - To employers in any industry who either feel lost on who to hire or want to create a more consistent hiring process to maximize your marketing department's performance. Here you will learn to better understand roles and the part they play in your growth process to ensure effective decision-making when hiring full-time or contract employees for a marketing-related position. Every year, it's more evident that choosing the right hire in this field is critical to organizational success. Your days of choosing blindly are over! I reveal technical skills that good marketers should possess to help you better understand how marketers should be functioning and their relational ties to your sales team. You've got a taste of that already, but if you're looking to organize your current marketing staff better and hire true marketers, read on. When you're finished, your approach to hiring a marketer will be totally different.

Marketers, in both instances, this content will cut through the confusing industry related clutter - making your career path much easier!

Additionally, I'd like you to know upfront the two hot topics I won't even touch.

- This book is NOT for growth hackers - I have no plans to address or discuss shortcuts or cheat codes on how to circumvent your way to becoming a better marketer. Marketing is a learned skill with many moving parts, not a quick way to make a buck. This, in my opinion, is another reason the industry suffers, and I will not contribute to the madness.
- This book will NOT teach manipulation - Marketing skirts this line too often all by itself due to the nature of the work and its relationship to the human psyche. I have no plans to discuss how to unethically manipulate or influence consumers into achieving your desired outcome. Ethics will be discussed, but it will be left to the reader to decide where they fall on the scale and how to make improved ethical decisions moving forward.

Truth be Told

As a human known for dropping "truth bombs" - I have a reputation for keeping it real. Some like it, some don't. Nevertheless, the truth will be told.

The very first truth that comes to mind - and one we can all agree on - is that this life goes quickly! Now on the eve of my 40s, I'm called a "baby" quite a bit. Living in the South, they say it's somehow a compliment. But my Northern brain has to convince me of that... often. I mean, my babies are getting ready to graduate, so I can hardly claim the title.

What I can claim is a deep-rooted sense of perspective because I've been warned that "life goes quick, enjoy it" consistently since I was 19. Thankfully, I had the foresight to actually listen. I listened because I trusted others who had lived some life. So early on, I understood my kids would leave the house, and I would be dead before I knew it.

How's that for a truth bomb?

Tell me



ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Let's Take a Moment to Talk About... Death

I think about death quite a bit. In the hopes of not totally bumming you out before you even make it past Chapter 1, it's essential to gain perspective on where you are and where you're heading on your own path.

I'm curious, do you ever think about death?

Not the fear of it or obsessing over how it will happen, but the reality of "I may not be here tomorrow, and if I get the chance to live a full life, will anyone remember the contributions I made to the world?"

Considering the sheer volume of people who've passed on since earth's creation compared to how many you recall, never-mind impacted you, the odds of being remembered aren't in our favor. I know that's a sober and profound start, but I'm a firm believer that we can't move forward until we understand where we are now. I want to help you advance in your career, and the reality is work and life are highly interconnected.

That's all to say, I urge you to fully understand where you are now to gain perspective on the "how and why" fueling your next best steps. To feel confident about your way forward, I'd like to share part of my life's recipe: a healthy dose of perspective.

You are so much more than just a marketer, and your career affects more than just your professional life. Considering the swiftness of life allows me to be more content with where I am today. Trust me, I have in no way perfected that statement, but I work on it daily. Whether in the midst of family chaos or working out a year-long marketing strategy, the impermanence of life gives me confidence in who I am today. It also enables me to carefully consider where I am in every moment of every day, including that last interchange with an annoying co-worker.

I could offer up a myriad of examples of the granular contributors this mindset has on my daily choices, but the point is, I strive to seize every daily opportunity with the hopes of living a life that glorifies God and impacts others now! This philosophy provides a fearlessness and the ability to seize opportunities that I may not have otherwise taken. It's what gave me hope while raking all summer long, and it's why I have the guts to write a book on a topic that thousands of other people are also experts in. It allows me to make things right between those I have offended and take career risks that could make or break me. In my mind, I have nothing to lose, and when your heart and intentions are pure, neither do you.

I get it; it's weird to talk about death in the first chapter of a marketing book, but here I am, seizing an opportunity to encourage you to look at your career relative to your life and what you hope to accomplish with both.

Why?

Because the path you take in life is important to me. If we looked at life as a roadmap, it would seem hectic – a hot mess of clumpy pavement laid down way too quick, not reaching any real destination. If we looked at life compared to someone else, we'd give up all hope of accomplishment because trust me, there's always someone better!

Made to Market

When we look to our life to validate who we are as humans, we'll always be left disappointed and wanting more. So, let's not look at life that way anymore! Instead, what if we looked at our life's path with a unique purpose? That your life is a combination of events that present opportunities to positively affect the lives of others.

(design quote) What if our career isn't only about the work but also about the impact we're meant to leave on the world while leveraging the passions we've had since childhood? What if we were fully content with being as good as we are today, knowing we will learn, gain wisdom, and improve as we plod along?

If you are here to learn more about marketing, the next thought may be, "How can marketing have a lasting impact on my life? On any life?" Trust me, if that's what your calling is – you WILL make a lasting impact on many lives! The world tells us that the only way to make an impact is to engage in sweeping, heroic sacrifices that end in practical knighthood. But what if each of our lives is precisely that? Sacrificial. Without all the pomp and circumstance, of course.

I mean, I'd prefer NOT to be knighted, or whatever the female version is. That kind of attention just makes me feel very uncomfortable, anyway! But what if our impact is in the generational stories passed down among the progeny of those we've impressed ourselves upon? I'd much rather focus on that because who knows how the world will spin it. At least in the latter scenario, it's a genuine response to the real impact of walking a mile with another human. Severely lacking in our present world, a service-based life is way more rewarding than knighthood and at the core of a true marketer.

I believe each life is special, has a purpose, and is meant to be used to glorify God. Even if you are a marketer. When we glorify God, we aren't the ones taking credit, but our lives are a reflection of His work in us. My husband puts it much better, mostly because, as a screenwriter, he's much better at storytelling than I am. When I'm highly discouraged, have no clue why I'm drawn to marketing and can't fathom why I'm so passionate about it – losing sleep over solutions to problems I dream about solving – Dan says, "If you are a street sweeper, sweep streets to the glory of God." Then he'll go on to say, "If you are a marketer, market to the glory of God."

So, I wake up today the same way I wake up every day – Made to Market for the glory of God.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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