



Will Reed's Guerrilla Marketing **GENIUS**

"Wake up your brain, learn how to earn!"

June 2005

Beyond permission

*I won't say yes,
I won't say no—
but I'm giving you
a definite maybe!*
Samuel Goldwyn



*You're
still the one that
makes me shout,
still the one that
I dream about
Orleans song,
Still The One*

**Permission is a qualified maybe.
You've got to go beyond that to an
unqualified Yes!**

Permission is a far cry from enthusiasm. Psychologically, it is still in the, "I'm just looking, thank you" category of non-commitment.

In a world of multiple options and abundant choices, it is all too easy for a product to lose its luster. Whereas benefits used to outsell features, now it takes charisma to outsell benefits—a personal magnetism or charm that attracts and influences others.

The real marketing challenge is how to get on the customer's short list—and then to become what Joe Calloway calls *a category of one* (see Resources section).

1. Give people a reason to love you

There is enormous pressure today to commoditize—to standardize, to copy and distribute as cheaply as possible.

Commodities enjoy no brand loyalty, and suffer under constant competitive threat. People don't love commodities.

Guerrilla Marketing recommends that 60% of your marketing should be devoted to your existing customers, 30% to prospects, and 10% to the world at large. Focus on the customer, not the product—on the relationship, not the sale.

Create a customer relationship—give people a reason to love you.

2. Study the cult brands

Magazines like *Business Week*, *Forbes*, *Fast Company*, and the *Wall Street Journal* have all given coverage to the phenomenon of cult brands like Apple, Harley-Davidson, and Starbucks.

Cult brands enjoy a degree of loyalty that is closely connected to the customer's values and lifestyle, and borders on obsession. Cult brands can provide hints that even small companies can adapt.

The phenomenon has launched a best-selling book, *The Power of Cult Brands*, by Matthew Ragas and BJ Bueno, and you can explore these brands and concepts at: <http://www.cultbranding.com>

3. Develop a "Only-One" brand strategy

You cannot be all things to all people. You have to step away from the crowd and offer something unique. Ask yourself *these* tough questions:

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Just having satisfied customers isn't good enough any more, you have to create raving fans
Ken Blanchard



You must create a compelling experience to win in today's marketplace
Joe Calloway



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- What really makes you worthy of being your customer's top choice?
- What can you do to understand what your customer's want, and to deliver it to them better than anyone else?
- How can you defy comparison so that you don't have to compete on a commodity basis by price alone?

To answer these questions you must clearly define your identity and your marketing niche—your claim to be the Only One.

4. Capture know-how in a system

Use a combination of observation and customer feedback to determine what it is that makes your company special. Pat yourself once on the back, and then get to work in converting this precious know-how into a system.

Start with a checklist of *best practices* and *repeatable behaviors* that captures this know-how so that you can track it and teach it.

Having a system will guarantee the consistent delivery of quality products and extraordinary service that builds customer loyalty.

5. Aim to do even better

Nothing is static in business. Never assume that past performance is any as-

urance of success. Avoid complacency by looking at your business from your customer's perspective.

Matching your competitors' activity is the slow road to oblivion. You will do far better by focusing on customer needs. Demand at least as much of yourself as your customer demands of you.

Continuous incremental improvement is not only obtainable, it can be applied to every aspect of your business.

Resources

Becoming a Category of One, by Joe Calloway, shows you how to make the commitment to become extraordinary, to transcend commodity, and defy comparison. For further information visit: <http://www.joecalloway.com>

Blue Ocean Strategy is an international bestseller on how to create uncontested market space and render your competition irrelevant. Visit the website: <http://www.blueoceanstrategy.com>

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Lessons in Permission Marketing

- *Get their permission (April)*
 - *Gaining mind share (May)*
 - *Beyond permission (June)*
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