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**DYNAMIC
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ENDING THE SACRIFICE OF THE MANY FOR THE ONE

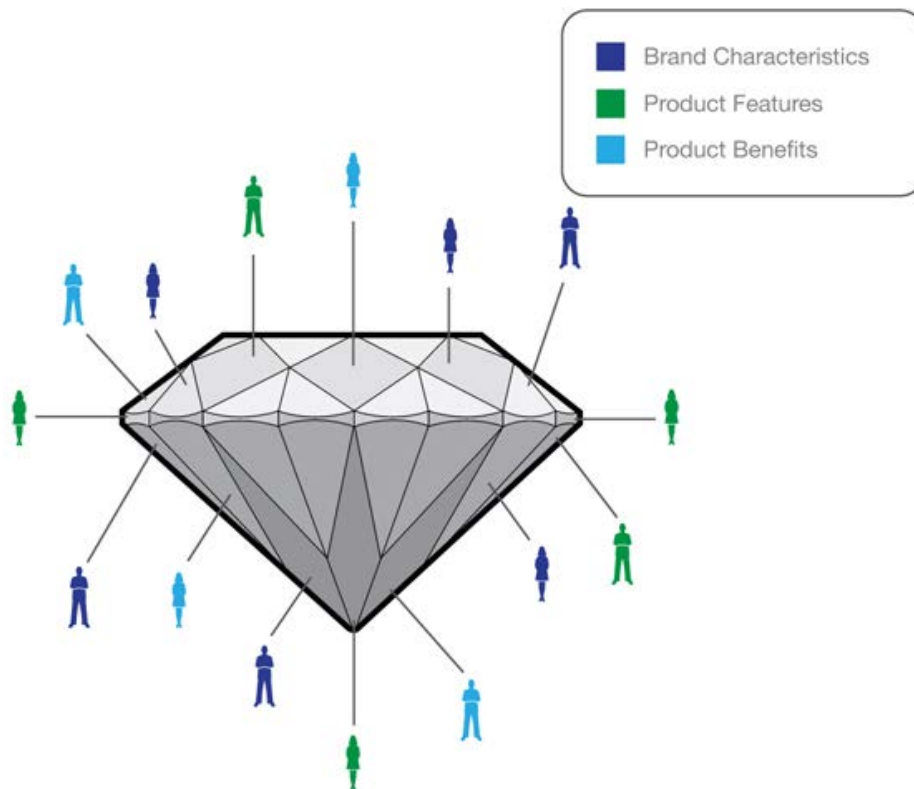
We've all been at the table for those endless branding and positioning meetings, the ones that seem to lead everywhere and nowhere simultaneously. You know how they play out. Everyone has a different take on what the brand offers and to whom. The marketing director sees it one way and the vice president of sales sees it another. The boss has his own perspective and pretty soon, even legal and your CFO have an opinion, which is always challenging when it comes to marketing.

Then, to resolve the impasse, the white-boards are rolled out, the colored pens get passed around, the consultant-facilitated exercises kick in, and the buzzwords start to fly. Anything you can think of, in an attempt to bring about consensus and reasonable resolution, is tried. Countless skewed opinions are compiled into neatly disguised research, departmental reports, customer and demographic metrics, as well as the notorious stakeholder anecdotes, and let's not forget those glorious, ever-present "focus groups of one." And what's the worst part of this whole process, especially if it's your job to lead it? Just about everyone is usually right! At least to a degree.

Almost any brand or product/service naturally offers a range of benefits to a variety of prospects and customers. Depending on who they are, and what they're looking for, consumers can be matched to a different brand attribute or feature of a brand/product/service.

The Many Facets of a Brand

A brand is like a diamond. Picture your **brand** as a diamond whose many facets represent the different points of connection to the potential universe of consumers. You can clearly see how the connection points to the brand or product/service, and to each consumer, are different. Just as the facets of a diamond refract light differently, the naturally occurring brand attributes or product features reflect differently to different audiences.



Like a diamond, a brand has many different facets. Distinct target audiences are attracted to distinct facets of a brand and respond on an emotional level to messages that underscore a specific brand attribute.

So how do we, as **marketers**, leverage the varied potential market appeal and associated brand messaging of our brand's total possible audience reach without diluting our primary market messaging, strategy and budgets?

Sacrificing the Many for the One

How do we create and deploy marketing that nurtures the growth of a brand without delineating one clear message for one definitive audience that concentrates our communications enough to reach the awareness tipping point and prompt action?

After all, conventional wisdom says utilize a single core message strategy that determines the single best claim and promise you can fulfill as an organization, then match it to a core target audience that can be reached efficiently and has the size to sustain the sales growth and goals of the company.

This same strategy, by its very success, also simultaneously casts the brand as a misfit for the plethora of other market share slices to which the brand could also appeal.

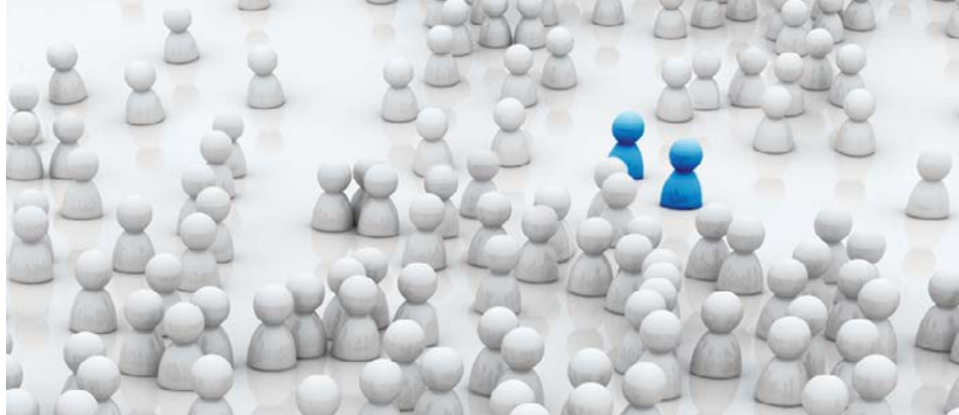
That old, conventional thinking has been called our best practice marketing strategy for the last 50 years. It has been our dominant marketing theory, our sacred creed: Thou shalt wholeheartedly eliminate the brand attributes from the messaging and the brand essence that naturally exists and that many internal stakeholders know exist and the metrics show exist. Thou shalt instead appeal to "one primary target audience" (and maybe a couple of secondary influencers) that has been ordained as the one upon which you shall build your marketing reach.

Many Marketers Dismiss Most Potential Customers

The obvious and inherent inefficiency of our long established best-practice thinking is that the true potential market will never be discovered by the brand if this traditional strategy is deployed.

So how do we, as marketing leaders, bring it all together? How do we maximize the reach to our primary target audience without turning off the various niche audiences that could also purchase our product at significant levels?

Traditionally, the answer has been: We can't. So, we don't. Instead, we go through this intensive analytic process of examining the features, benefits, attributes and our potential marketing claims one by one. We identify them and then we quantify them. We categorize them and then qualify them. We line them up and run them through our branding best-practices filter, and then—are you ready?



The sacrifice of the many for the one—most marketers pass up 98% of potential customers in order to make solid contact with the 2% who are the most likely to convert into customers.

We start dismissing them. We dismiss one unquestionably accurate, intrinsic, and powerful brand quality after another. Under conventional wisdom, and based on legacy 17 level technology platforms, only one claim, only one essential message can be the winner. It's like a beauty pageant where the highly attractive attributes get sent off stage one by one until a single message emerges that stands out above all the rest—"Here she comes, Miss America!"—the key brand message, with its unique selling point and singular brand attribute, that will hit the single biggest market slice you have identified that your brand has the qualities to support.

Getting back to the often endless internal branding debate, it's not that the operations guy was wrong or the vice president of customer relations or the CEO or even legal were wrong. The brand does naturally speak uniquely to different people, and those differences are accelerated based on the individuals' environmental conditions or progression in the buying cycle.

Another Look at Trout & Ries

This sacred dance of positioning has been the essence and common denominator of all great marketing for the last four decades. In their seminal work, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, Jack Trout and Al Ries changed marketing forever by declaring that you can't just tell people to buy; you have to show them that the product is right for them. By establishing this affinity, you can influence people to desire your product and then you realize your highest return on your marketing investments.

Ever since then, the great minds of marketing have turned themselves to the task of discovering and developing that singular relevancy in messaging that will make any given product feel perfectly right to the largest number of people.

Find the one, and winnow out everything else. Zero in on the single message that best conveys your brand to the exclusion of all others. And then you've got the keys to the kingdom—you've got the magic element that will propel your brand to its peak of popularity and profitability. It has been a high art and a deep science, a combination of exceptionally thoughtful strategy and the bold, brash roll of the dice based on others' experiences. And what does the traditional "sacrifice of the many for the one" get you? The hope of a 2% return, assuming the strategy is on the mark and the execution is professional. That's what all the blood, sweat and bruising debate is all about. All the discussion and analysis of what we offer and who we offer it to. All the positioning and repositioning and post-positioning. All the getting it right and getting it wrong and doing it anyway. It comes down to chasing a fleeting 2% return on your marketing investment.

All this begs the question: What happened to the remaining 98% who offered no response whatsoever? The ignored majority. As we all know, if we follow the conventional wisdom of homing in on your one core audience and the singularity of brand attributes they are most likely to respond to, at the expense of all others, we intentionally pass up the 98%. Traditional marketing strategy has dictated: In order to make solid contact with the 2% or less that we have determined are most likely to convert into customers, we must turn a blind eye to other perfectly good customers.

We sacrificed the natural and inarguable relevancies to the various groups making up that 98% in order to hit our target audience straight and hard, in order to arrive at that single positioning most likely to succeed with the single group most likely to be receptive. Conventional wisdom demands we concentrate our media, sales efforts and organizational resources at the minority that are most likely to respond.

One-to-one: The Beginning

In their groundbreaking 1993 book, *The One-to-One Future*, Don Peppers and Martha Rogers were the first marketing theorists to stress the importance of extreme segmentation and personalization in successful marketing—essentially making a unique offering of a product or service to each prospective customer. They stressed that marketers had to understand the customer's point of view, behaviors and perceptions, and use that knowledge as the foundation for **marketing communication**.

But that was nearly 20 years ago—before we had email, Google, WiFi or broadband Internet, social media, dynamically accessible databases, or an entire economy revolving around 24/7, perpetually connected two-way communication devices. While it was a revolutionary concept that has proven to be a very valuable insight, it was economically impossible to fully implement the concept except for those with public company time-lines and budgets, until very recently.

One-to-one: A Deep Connection with Each Customer

Today, this is no longer merely a theoretical insight. Nor is it a best practice that only the biggest can afford. Now, it is possible to fully realize the potential of one-to-one marketing because newly available technology allows you to develop the same knowledge about each of your customers and prospects, whether there are hundreds or millions of them. This new capability allows dynamically generated dialogue within your marketing that provides the platform for a mutual and real-time marketing relationship upon which you can build **brand success** and sales.

In a very real sense, you can now have the same sort of relevant, interactive relationship with huge numbers of customers with the kind of relevance and timing that only mom-and-pop stores, or the best corporate salespeople, could develop through face-to-face contact. That means dynamically segmenting audiences, communicating individually and personally resonating with each member—all automatically and instantaneously.

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Principal: Brian Fabiano

Employees: 38

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Location:

7819 East Greenway Rd

Suite 5

Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Contact:

phone (480) 478-8500

fax (480) 478-8510

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