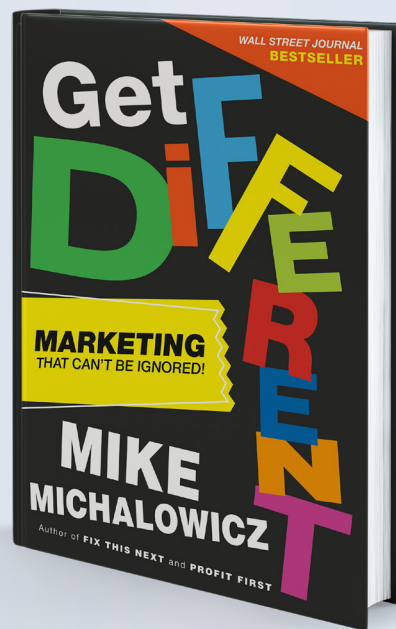


BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read



Get Different

By Mike Michalowicz

Mike Michalowicz launched and sold two multimillion-dollar companies and is the bestselling author of *Profit First*, *The Pumpkin Plan*, *Clockwork*, *The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*, and *Fix This Next*. He is the host of the American Express Turning Points podcast, and he is a popular speaker who has shared his insights on business and entrepreneurship at TEDx, CreativeLive, INCmty, and others. His columns have appeared in The Wall Street Journal, Box Pro magazine, Entrepreneur, OPEN Forum, Harvard Business Review, and more.

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Marketing That Can't Be Ignored

If you ask the author of *Fix This Next* and *Profit First*, Mike Michalowicz, the number one problem for small business owners is a lack of marketing. Sure, all business owners know they need to market their products or services but the problem is that most of them don't create marketing strategies that actually work. In order to get attention in a market that is completely inundated with marketing messages, a business owner has to find a way to be different.

You may have thought up the most impressive and alluring intro offer ever conceived but it will not do you a single bit of good if nobody knows about it. If there is one thing Mike Michalowicz cannot abide, it's letting "great products and services languish in obscurity." The promise of *Get Different: Marketing That Can't Be Ignored* is that by the end of reading it, business owners will be ready to make sure they "get noticed and get results in a crowded market—no matter what."

Your Responsibility to Market

Internet marketing is clearly an absolute imperative for every small business. It's been around long enough for us to remember the days when placing an "under construction" banner on a new website seemed pioneering. By about 2005, internet marketing had evolved to the point of being "gross and inauthentic at best, manipulative and predatory at worst." When it comes to marketing your product, which is better for your customer than any other product, you have an absolute responsibility to ensure that your ideal customer knows about it. If your competition is offering an inferior solution to your customer's problem, it is your fault that they don't know any better. This is a mission that is much bigger. "It is about you, your family, your community, our world. If you offer something that serves, you must make everyone aware. We need you, but we don't know you exist. And that "not knowing you exist" part is your responsibility to fix. Starting immediately." The good news is that Michalowicz holds the key. All you have to do is be so different that people must take notice. In the remainder of the book, he gives concrete advice on how to do just that.



The DAD Marketing Framework

The human brain tends to ignore what is familiar and take quick notice of the things that stand out as unordinary. This is true for predators on the hunt for their next meal and for consumers who are filtering through a constant barrage of marketing messages. To get our message across to our ideal customer, we have to not only get their attention, we have to make them take action. “This is the foundation of the three-step DAD Marketing Framework.”

Step 1: Differentiate

This first step is all about finding a way to make your marketing message stand out “in a sea of sameness.” So many small business owners and marketers skip this differentiation bit and just throw their best offer out there. This is a huge mistake. You may have the most enticing offer available but without communicating it in a way that actually gets noticed, no one will even know it’s an option to buy. A great tip for finding how to be different is to look at what the standard is for the industry of your business. If they are all positioning themselves as apples, find a way to show them an orange. Standard practices are “massive opportunities to be different.” If you hear yourself saying or thinking, “no one does that,” you just may be onto something great.

Step 2: Attract

You must figure out who you want to pull in and how to avoid pushing them out. You have an ideal customer. Your marketing must be designed to turn them on. It must be attractive to the kind of client you have identified as your ideal. If your people are into the tall, dark, and handsome type don’t give them short, light, and homely. A mistake that marketers frequently make is to design a message that gets attention, so they nail the aspect of it being different, but they fail to make it desirable, which is not attractive.

Step 3: Direct

The final step is to get your prospect to take a specific action that you want them to take. This needs to be simple, direct, and specific. Tell them exactly what you want to do and how they can easily and efficiently do it. A common misstep on this step is to make the directive excessive. You can’t direct your customer to plop down a million bucks on a property based on a marketing message. It’s far more reasonable to ask them to attend an open house or request a showing.

The Target One Hundred

You cannot design and launch a marketing campaign, even one that is perfectly different, attractive, and directed, into a vacuum. You absolutely must find ways to “track its effectiveness.” Market research science, on which the book and suggested practices are based, shows that the minimum sample size you need to determine if a strategy worked or not is one hundred. On the other end of the spectrum, you want to cap your test sample to five hundred. After five hundred, analysis can become unwieldy.

With those parameters in mind, you have to identify those 100-500 people. Put some thought into considering which 100 people you want and need to target. These are people who “you are salivating to have as customers.” When he asks you to consider this, he doesn’t mean in an idealized sort of way. Michalowicz suggests you create “an actual list—the contact’s name, the company name (if applicable), email address, physical address, all that jazz.” If you cannot identify the actual people that should be on your list, Michalowicz has a newsflash for you. You cannot possibly get the marketing results you want if you do not know who you are trying to catch.

There are three “mission critical” elements to marketing to your target one hundred. Who, What, and Win should be repeated to yourself so frequently that they become absolutely engrained. Clearly identifying Who is all about knowing exactly who your ideal customer is. Your perfectly ideal off is the What. What you want to get out of your marketing efforts is your Win. “Know these three elements, and you will be able to market more effectively than ever before.”

Differentiate

If you want to get attention, which is essential to gaining new customers, you have to be different. Being different makes you stand out from the rest. Your first job as a marketer is to capture that attention in the milliseconds you have to do so. Whatever differentiator you come up with has to pass the “blink test.” If you land on something that does, you then design a marketing plan around that, not the other way around.

You can differentiate by choosing an out of the norm medium, so that your targets are receiving your message in a different way than normal. There are more mediums than you may realize, including “videos, signs, brochures, direct mail, influencer marketing, print, packaging, outdoor advertising, indoor advertising, phone, website, pay-per click, search engine marketing, social media, affiliate, email, television, speaking, referral networking, facilitated word of mouth, trade shows, conferences, access point marketing, PO, listings, endorsements” and more. Whatever your competition is doing, consider delivering your message in a different medium and it may be just the ticket you need to get attention.

Choosing a different medium than others is not the end all, be all. A boring, snoozefest of a message delivered by singing telegram is still boring and snooze worthy. One way to find the message that will hit for your product or service is to identify your “est.” “The est is the superlative of something. Your marketing can be the craziest or weirdest or funniest. Or it can be the sincerest or deepest. It simply needs to be the most in its category. Extremes are noticeable and memorable.” The key is to pick the est that perfectly amplifies you and what you’re selling.

Another way to mine marketing gold is to search outside of your industry to see what is working for businesses that are nothing like yours. “What is already happening for another community has potential to be new and different for yours.” Michalowicz calls this a blend technique and sites such as examples as banks



... show your customer that they have more to gain than to lose by doing business with you.”

installing drive throughs after seeing how successful it was for fast food restaurants.

Attract

Once you have figured out a way to grab the attention of your target by differentiating yourself, you have to attract them. You've managed to get your target on the hook but you still have to reel them in. Attracting a customer is all about taking that initial awareness and changing it into “enduring attraction.” To do this, you have to show your customer that they have more to gain than to lose by doing business with you. They sustain their attraction by feeling safe and secure being your customer. You have to “win them over again and again” because once they bore of what you're selling, you're done.

To do this, you have to “consider which Attraction Influencers” you can leverage to keep your customers interested. These are people whose association with you and your product helps make customers feel good about being associated with it, too. They are people who have authority because they are leaders in their own industry or category. They may be a trusted source with whom your customer has had some experience with in the past. Customers are drawn to businesses that have some sort of social significance, through giving back to particular causes or communities. There are seemingly endless categories of attraction influencers. The trick is the find the one that makes your message resonate and pull your target customer in.

Direct

If you manage to get a target reeled in through a message that is both differentiated and attractive, you have to convert to an actual sale. So many marketers make the mistake of over complicating this step or giving customers too many options. Think about street performers. They don't hang up a sign listing five different ways you can show your appreciation of their performance. If they perform an act that is different enough to get your attention and interesting enough to keep it, they want you to do one simple thing: put cash in the tip jar.

When you add multiple steps or provide a litany of options, you are setting yourself up for friction and failure. Your direction has to be super simple and one clear action. Think buy now, sign up for the newsletter, grab your samples, and similar one-step calls to action. “With every marketing offer, make sure you have one clear directive, and make it easy to do.”

When designing your directive you need to keep your community in mind. Ask yourself, “what can your community see, hear, or understand that other people can't? What would they

respond to that other people might not?” People respond better when they feel a sense of belonging with or connection to your directive. Using language that is familiar and on point with your targets is critical. It also needs to align with them emotionally and logically. Do they value “quick wins, easy steps, and fast rewards” or are they more concerned with long-term goals such as “permanent change, noticeable impact, and improvement.”

Finally, when considering what you will direct your target customers to do, you should take a look at your relationship to them in terms of whether you and your business are “someone superior, someone equal, or someone inferior.” “In other words, do they aspire to be like you, gain from you, or learn from you—a superior position where you can give advice and assistance? Or do they see you as one of them, as an equal who can commune, share, and exchange? Or do they see you as inferior, in a position where you can gain from them?” These positions are fluid and changeable based on whatever circumstances are present and as a marketer you will experience all three of them. When directing these prospects you have to take into account what that relationship position is at that moment.

In *Get Different: Marketing That Can't Be Ignored* Mike Michalowicz breathes new life into a marketing lesson that stands the test of time. To be effective, any marketing strategy absolutely must “Differentiate, Attract, and Direct explicitly.” If you can do that, you will win your target. If you cannot or do not, then you won't. The idea is beautifully simplistic yet implementing it is more nuanced than failed marketers understand. It is easier to go with the crowd than to stand out. Being creative does not always come naturally. The fact that you have mere milliseconds in the modern market to grab a pair of eyes makes it all the more difficult.

Small business owners who find themselves afraid of marketing or feel they are spinning their wheels, investing in strategies that do not get results will find clear and effective direction in Michalowicz's latest book. Putting his strategies into practice will allow you to stretch, tone, and build your marketing muscles and as they gain strength so too will your confidence. You will start seeing the results you are seeking and your business will grow. If you listen to Michalowicz, you will refuse to succumb to the “sea of sameness, trendy thing, the best practices, the industry standards, or the “everyone else does it” justifications.” If you want to see your business grow you have to own your own message, not repeat someone else's. Never give up and your wildest business dreams will come true.