



## The Marketing Untangled Series

### - Why I Wrote It and How It Works!

Through all my years of working in marketing – whether at agencies, within businesses, or as a consultant, teacher, or mentor – things always come back to the same basic foundational things again and again. People are anxious to see results, and therefore tend to want to dive into tactics. What advertising to do, which social media to be on, what to say, and so on.

Well, here's the truth of the matter: tactical decisions in marketing cannot be made without a solid strategy. A rock-solid foundation. This is why, without exception, I have always had to bring my clients and students back to the foundation. The marketing strategy. Because these foundations will then tell you what marketing tactics to use and what you should say in your marketing messages.

I have also found that marketing is as much about organisation, research, and project management as it is about strategy and tactics. Because without this underlying backbone of organisation and planning, your efforts will be unfocused, inconsistent and sporadic, which is not conducive to good results.

This is why I started to develop materials and processes to lead my clients and students through, allowing them to build a solid marketing strategy and program that works. To build a system for your marketing, a marketing machine, that you can then run to get the customers and business that you want. I call it my map through the marketing jungle – my step-by-step process for untangling the marketing mess (hence *Marketing Untangled*). It consists of five steps, and each of these steps is the subject of a separate book in the *Marketing Untangled* series, as well as the topics covered in the modules of my online training program – *The Marketing Untangled Training*.

I'm not going to pretend that I came up with all this myself. I didn't. These things have been researched, studied, tried, and tested in business and academia around the world. The strategies are the same ones underlying the success of businesses we see all around us: Apple, Coca-Cola, Nike – but also thousands of small- and medium-sized businesses who have grown to where they want to be, and perhaps did not want to become the next global corporation. What I have done is to distil all this knowledge and experience into a practical, jargon-free, step-by-step process suitable to the needs of entrepreneurs and small and medium businesses. What you need to know; nothing more – and nothing less – in an easy to digest and easy to use manner. No fluff, no academic mumbo jumbo.

The purpose of these books is not to make you a marketing expert. Nor should you necessarily want to be one. However, if you own or run a business, marketing is something you must have a good understanding of.

Why? Because marketing is at the heart of business. Marketing is your business. It is the lifeblood of your business. Marketing is what gets customers and without customers you don't have a business. It is all about understanding the needs of the customers and fulfilling those in a profitable way – that is the definition of marketing. As Al Ries said: *“Marketing is what a company is in business to do. Marketing is a company's ultimate objective.”*

Peter Drucker had it spot on: *“Marketing is the distinguishing, the unique function of the business...Marketing is not only much broader than selling, it is not a specialized activity at all. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of the final result, that is from the customer's point of view. Concern and responsibility for marketing must therefore permeate all areas of the enterprise.”*

I'd ask whether you still think marketing has nothing to do with you – but then, you'd probably not be reading this book. ;)

The other reason for having a good understanding of marketing strategy and the various tactical options out there is because when you do buy marketing services or hire marketing staff, you need to be an informed buyer. You may not want to become an expert in social media or search engine optimisation or any of the other tools and tactics available to you, but you should have a basic understanding of what they are and what they are supposed to do – so that you know what services you are buying, what skills you are hiring, and whether they are working for you.

Since my life as a marketing nerd started at the dawn of this new century, I have seen way too many great businesses fail to reach their potential and many fail completely. I have seen entrepreneurs with an incredible amount of passion for what they do get absolutely nowhere. I have seen fantastic products and services fall by the wayside. In the majority of those cases, it is because the team lacked understanding of and skills in marketing. A 2012 literary review at the University of Iceland<sup>1</sup> showed without a shadow of a doubt that marketing orientation (looking at business from the point of view of the customer à la Drucker) and marketing skills are the single biggest business success factors, irrespective of business size. This is simply something people cannot ignore and if left unattended, your business will curl up and die.

However, we can't all become marketing experts and we can't all spend years getting marketing degrees (and many would argue their limited usability in the marketing trenches anyway). We need the most effective injection of marketing knowledge and understanding possible, and that is exactly what *Marketing Untangled* is all about, and that is exactly what I want to give you. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Each book is about a key ingredient in your marketing strategy. Your strategy is really, really important and worth doing well, because it lays a solid foundation for all your marketing efforts and makes all your marketing activities much more focused and efficient. One could say that your strategy work is about 80% of your marketing, so if you do your job well with this stuff, the other 20% will be so much more effective.

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<sup>1</sup> Eysteinnsson, Friðrik, and Guðlaugsson, Þórhallur Örn, 2012. Literature review at University of Iceland. Presentation by Friðrik for Dokkan in February 2012, *Hvers vegna ná sum fyrirtæki viðvarandi betri árangri en önnur? Or: Why do some companies consistently perform better than others?* <http://www.slideshare.net/Dokkan/fridrik-eisteins-feb2012>.

A solid marketing strategy also makes all your marketing decisions so much easier. It works a bit like a compass. When you are not sure what to do, you can go back to your strategy and it will help you make a decision. If things fit within the strategy, you are off to the races; if not, then you will have a clear reason why and be able to let that idea go without having to worry if it was the right thing to do.

In the first book, *Target Groups Untangled*, I discuss the importance of knowing your audience (also called your target groups). In that book, I show how to determine who your target groups are – and what you need to know and understand about them to effectively reach them. This is the first element in building a powerful marketing strategy.

The second marketing strategy pillar is knowing and analysing the competition. You need to know them because they represent other options your potential customers are considering and if you don't know them, you'll have an impossible task of explaining to people why they should choose your products and services instead of what your competitors are offering. The competition, who they are, what you need to know about them, where you can find out about them, and then what to do with that information – and how it can help you – is the subject of another book in the series, *Competition Untangled*.

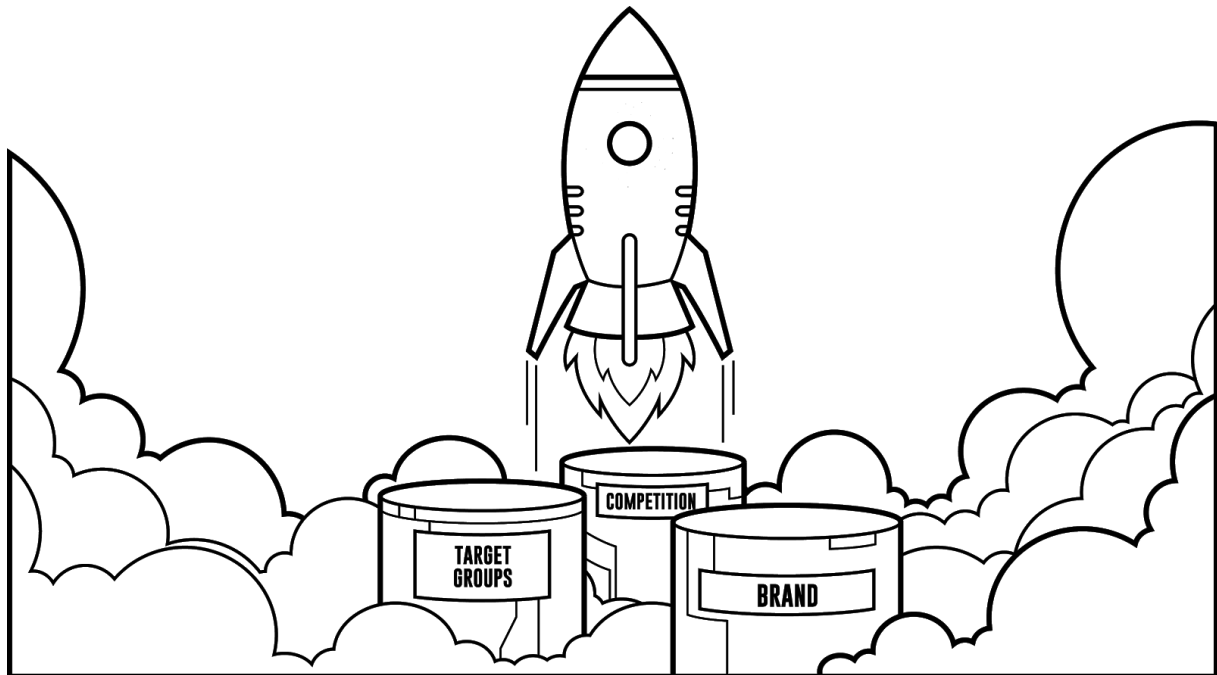
One of the most important things knowledge of the competition gives you is that it allows you to differentiate yourself from them – to be able to confidently answer when someone asks, “Why should I buy from you rather than them?” That differentiation then becomes a core element in your brand, the third pillar of your marketing strategy, and the subject of *Branding Untangled*.

Your brand is the mental and emotional associations people have with you, your business, product, or service. In other words, your brand is what they think and feel about you – and make no mistake, this is arguably the single most important thing in marketing. Why? Because people buy based on thoughts and feelings – and your brand is what determines what they think of you and how they feel about you and hence whether they buy from you. Also, having a strong and interesting brand, being different and distinctive from the competition, is an absolute necessity to cut through the noise of a crowded marketplace and get noticed.

In *Branding Untangled* I lead you through the strategy for successfully building a brand; deciding what you want people to think and feel about you, and how you can then build that brand in the hearts and minds of people out there.

Once you have these solid foundations for your marketing strategy, then, and only then, can you start thinking about what marketing communications channels, tools, and tactics to use and what to say to your market. Your target groups will tell you where you can reach them, and what marketing messages will be most effective, and your brand (which needs to be different and distinctive from the competition) will help you get noticed and get people's attention.

Knowing your target groups, knowing your competitors – and based on these two, creating a strategy for the brand you want to build - are the pillars supporting a powerful launchpad for your marketing communications.



In part four of the process, and the subject of *Marketing Communications Untangled*, we look at how your marketing communication activities need to support each other and create a holistic program to get people to buy from you.

People don't just see your ad once and jump straight into buying. You need to make sure that you have the right tools to attract them and get them to buy, so selection of marketing communications tools and making everything work together in a systematic fashion is vitally important. In *Marketing Communications Untangled*, I also introduce a multitude of marketing communications tools and tactics at your disposal, thereby helping you choose the ones that are right for your business.

The final part of an effective marketing program is setting up a system. Knowing all about your target groups and competition, having a kick-ass brand strategy, and knowing exactly what you want to say in your marketing messages – and what channels and tools you are going to use to get your message out there is useless if it doesn't actually get done. When you are running a startup or small- or medium-sized business, it is easy to get distracted and not get your marketing done. This is deadly. The only way to get things done is by getting organised. This is covered in *Marketing Systems Untangled*. It's all about getting your marketing organised, taking all the work you did on strategy and marketing communications and using that as a "springboard" to set up a plan – finalising that map through the marketing jungle so that you can then start to follow it step-by-step to your money tree.

If the target groups, competition and brand are the pillars of the launchpad for your marketing communications rocket, then the marketing system is the fuel that makes sure it actually gets off the platform and keeps soaring!

As you can see, although I've broken the process into five steps and five separate books, these elements do not work in isolation. They all need to come together to form a marketing strategy and program that works and gets you customers. I therefore encourage you to read

all the books in the series as they come out and to use them to put your marketing machine together.

To further help you gain an overview of the five parts of the *Marketing Untangled Series*, I would like to give readers a free copy of the first and original book, *Marketing Untangled: The Small Business & Entrepreneur's Map Through the Marketing Jungle*. This book acts as an introduction to the series, and gives you a more detailed overview of the five elements of the process and how they fit together. You will find your copy in the reader resources for each of the books in the series.

One final thing. Things do not happen by themselves. In order for the materials in these books to actually be helpful, they must be put to use. It is not enough to just read it. I suggest you open your calendar or diary and set aside time regularly to work on your marketing, whether it is working through the *Marketing Untangled* books or any other marketing activities that need doing. More often than not it is not the most clever individuals in the world who achieve success, but rather the ones who take action. Knowledge is not power unless it informs action. And the fact is most people simply don't act, they simply don't do. Don't be one of them. Take action!

How does all this sound? Like the look of it? Well, let's get on with it then!

To your marketing success!



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