

## Welcome to Think, Do, Learn Marketing!

Welcome to *The Marketing Book*, 2018 edition.

This is a book about better *thinking*, better *doing*, and better *learning* when it comes to marketing your business. There are a lot of convoluted definitions of marketing out in cyberspace, so before we take one more step, let me give you a practical definition:

**Marketing** is the effort to create a positive environment or “brand” around your product or service, so that you sell more stuff, and make more money.

So this is a book about better marketing, about learning how to more easily and more effectively, create the environment that will help you sell more stuff (or more services, if you’re selling services). A big part of marketing is **promotion**; promoting your product or service more efficiently and more effectively to your target customers. But marketing is more than just promotion, as we shall see.

By the end of the book, you will have the knowledge you need to create a **marketing plan** for your business that will translate better *thinking* into better *doing*, and better *doing* into better *learning* so that you continually improve as a marketer and sell more stuff, more efficiently.

### Think / Do / Learn

This book teaches the **think / do / learn** method of marketing. Each Chapter teaches a marketing task by, first, explaining how to **think** about the concept, second, giving you specific **todos** to actually go do it, and third, providing tips on how to **learn** to do it better over time. Throughout the book, we’ll use the example of *Jason’s Cat Boarding Emporium*, a fictitious business in San Francisco, California, that boards cats for people who are leaving the city on vacation, and also offers cat grooming services as well as cat toys and paraphernalia for purchase online.

An example of the **think / do / learn** method would be as follows. First, we realize that we want more people to discover our cat grooming services. Busy San Franciscans can drop off their kitties and cats during the day, we’ll groom them, and board them until their owners are done from work. But how do they find out about us? So the *think* task is that we know we have a service (i.e., “cat grooming”), and we want to promote it to a target

customer segment, i.e. busy office workers. Next, we have the “do” component. How do we promote it? Well, one way is to use AdWords to advertise on Google for very specific keyword searches such as “cat grooming.” To do this effectively, we also need a little technical knowledge about what are called “keyword triggers” in Google AdWords. We’ll enter keywords into AdWords in the format of “cat grooming,” *+cat +grooming*, or *[cat grooming]*, so that our ads run specifically on our keywords and not on non-related terms. (That gives us efficiency). Finally, we’ll *learn* whether our ads are effective by comparing the cost-per-click with the revenue gained from new customers. As we learn about AdWords, we’ll become more efficient marketers, making more money with less blood, sweat, tears, and money spent by our company.

Is AdWords complicated? Yes, of course it is. So are the tens or even hundreds of other marketing concepts explained in this book. This book won’t teach you every single detail of how to do them. That would take a book of a thousand pages. Instead, this book will give you something more valuable than a thousand pages. This book will give you a **conceptual framework of think / do / learn** so that you can stay oriented as you dive deeply into a marketing objective, whether it’s how to advertise on AdWords, how to set up a Facebook Page, or even how to create a system of having your employees ask for customer reviews on Yelp.

With the framework of **think / do / learn** in your head, and with the miracle of the Internet at your fingertips, you can dive deeper into any marketing task and become a better marketer. “Once you know the question,” I often tell my students at Stanford Continuing Studies, “You can find the answer.” That’s the power of a framework, and that’s what this book will teach you.

## **Yes, Virginia, the World Needs Another Book on Marketing**

Let’s step back for a moment, and justify why the world needs yet another book on marketing.

This book grows out of a profound frustration I have with how marketing is taught and explained today. As a teacher, trainer, and corporate speaker, I know that despite the best efforts of professors and pundits, few people really understand the basics of marketing. Many students come up to me at my courses at Stanford Continuing Studies, and say, “Jason, I graduated from fill-in-the-blank prestigious university, but no one taught me a practical way to think about, and do, marketing.” Or I get, “Jason, we hired an SEO consultant, and he so thoroughly bamboozled us that we spent tens of thousands of dollars, and got nothing. We had no vision of what we wanted to accomplish, and we certainly had no knowledge of the practicalities of search engine optimization.” Or, when I flip it around, and I ask a student, a client, or a participant at a corporate workshop, “So, tell me what does your company do, who wants it, and how do you get the word out?” I then get a terribly funny deer-in-the-headlights look, or after stammers and starts, I get

an incomprehensible, vague statement of the business, and unclear definition of the target customers, and a flat-footed explanation of how they reach their customers.

Marketing is a mess; everyone knows they need to do it well, but no one really knows how to think clearly about it.

You can easily see what's wrong with marketing, today, if you look at the universe of books available on the topic. There are three different types, each with its own problems. First, there are **academic books**. These are books written by professors of marketing, largely for university students. Woody Allen said “Those who can't *do*, *teach*, and those you can't teach, *teach gym*.” Well, I wouldn't be so harsh, as a teacher and practitioner of marketing myself, but the point is well taken. A lot of academic books are terribly overpriced, and full of abstract, pretty useless discussions as if we are going to *study* marketing as opposed to *do* marketing. The guys and gals who write these overpriced books don't actually seem to have done any real marketing in the real world; they just seem to know how to pontificate about it.

The second type of book is produced by various gurus, most of whom seem to live in New York City, and produce what I call **inspiration marketing books**. These are books like *Crushing It* by Gary Vaynerchuk, *Building a StoryBrand* by Donald Miller, *Make it Rain!* by Reva Martin, or *All Marketers are Liars*, by Seth Godin. All of these books are good, but not great, books, but they are all about *inspiration*. That is, they get you fired up about marketing and you end up with your hands in the air, climbing on your desk, yelling, “I can do this! I can do marketing! This is awesome!” And then you sit down, and you ask yourself, “So, what exactly do I need to do now?,” and you have no practical answer. So you have a lot of *inspiration*, but not a thing about *perspiration*. You don't have any practical “do this, not that,” sort of knowledge.

The third group of books is what I call the *perspiration* group. These books are, most famously, the Dummies series of books by Wiley press, books like *Marketing for Dummies* by Jeanette McMurtry, and they are very much down in the weeds, telling you very specific things, which is great, but they tend to be dry and boring and lack a lot of inspiration. Especially those books like *Social Media Marketing All-in-One for Dummies* by Jan Zimmerman and Deborah Ng, or *SEO for Dummies* by Peter Kent, tend to be very “down in the weeds,” where you do a lot of perspiring as you figure out very technical things, but you're not always sure why you're doing something. In fact, these books can be so boring that you give up out of lack of inspiration. But, like the inspirational books, they are good, too, in their own way. Just incomplete.

### **Think. Do. Learn.**

This book, in contrast, is about, *thinking* and *doing*, *doing* and *learning*, and going back to thinking again. In contrast to the three common types of books on marketing, it doesn't

just describe abstract concepts like the academic books, or just get you fired up like the inspiration books, or just leave you in the weeds like the perspiration books. Instead, it teaches you how to toggle between important concepts like your Business Value Proposition, or Unique Selling Proposition, and important todos like building landing pages for your website. Or how to toggle between the idea that Social Media is awesome, and how to boost a post on Facebook through advertising.

You can't do without thinking, and there's no point in thinking without doing, and throughout you need to continually learn to be better at marketing so that you sell more stuff, more efficiently. Better marketing equals more sales at less cost and effort.

In fact, I believe so strongly that you have to do think, do, and learn simultaneously that I have even created a new word in the English language for this: ***twaggle***.

## **T W A G G L E**

Before you Google it, let me warn you that it's not a real word, at least not yet, and the only use I found so far is to describe a group of strung out methamphetamine addicts, called tweakers. I've known tweakers, and I am decidedly not advocating using drugs. *Drugs are bad. Don't do drugs.* But I want to appropriate this term from the tweaking community, and use it for a nobler purpose: to describe toggling between big concepts and specific todos, while not abandoning the one, while you're doing the other. By this I mean, not doing something specific, while having no idea why you're doing it. Nor doing something really “gee whiz wow,” like dreaming up your own Seth Godin “Purple Cow” without really translating that “gee whiz wow” concept into something practical. You need to do both, and you have to do both. At the same time. So this book is about *twaggle*, and and I am going to teach you marketing concepts and I am going to connect those to specific todos or action items.

### **Who This Book is For**

Who is this book for? This book is for small business owners and marketers. If you own a small business and want to market it better, this book is for you. If you work for a small business as the marketing manager, this book is for you. And if you are a jack of all trades person, like the guy or gal that does sales and marketing, this book is for you. If you are anyone who wants an introductory, practical tutorial on marketing, this is for you. This book is written for those of us who are down in the trenches on a daily basis, trying to market a product or service in today's largely digital – but not all digital – environment. It's for the people who have a pizza restaurant, and need to build out a Facebook page,

and actually have it increase pizza sales. It's for the marketing managers for a dentist or orthodontist, who need to encourage reviews on Google, Facebook, and Yelp, because they realize that real customers increasingly rely on online reviews. It's for marketing managers at law firms and accounting firms, who need to market lawyers or accountants better, both online and off. It's for the startup in St. Louis that has an idea for the next great app, but that needs to, first, write a very specific Business Value Proposition that translates the *inspiration* of this great idea into the *perspiration* of a step-by-step **marketing plan**, including figuring out what the best customer segments are. And it's for everyone, everywhere, who realizes that you can't do Facebook, if you don't, first, know what you sell, and who wants it, and if you don't, second, understand the basic mechanics of how Facebook operates, why people are on Facebook, and how to reach them, effectively, in a non-obtrusive way. (With the same going for Google search, LinkedIn or Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest). This book is for anyone who first heard of the word, *twaggle*, and thought, if only for a moment, “Hey, that's what I need. A guide to marketing the teaches me how to think clearly about marketing my business, how to do practical things to create a positive brand, and how to learn, continually, to get better at it.”

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You, and you alone, are responsible for your own marketing. Proceed at your own risk.

Oh, and be kind to each other. That's the most important advice anyone can ever give to anyone else.