2019

THE ROUSER MANIFESTO

An exposition of the modern marketing climate and a proposal for how to get marketing back to the boardroom.

INTRODUCTION

A RESPONSE TO INDUSTRY TRENDS

It is, going by the soundbites that we are fed daily by marketing media, currently very fashionable to claim that marketing has changed. Of course, it's only ever true if one equates *marketing* with *marketing tactics*. While the fundamentals of the former remain, their execution using the latter inevitably evolve.

The distinction between the two terms may, at first glance, seem as rather nit-picky. After all, does it not matter more what we do than what we say? Unfortunately, the lack of clarity has led to one of the most destructive, yet unsurprising, trends in marketing – its inevitable tactification. At an alarming rate, marketers working both brand and agency side ignore strategy in favour of tactics because that's what they believe marketing to be. Yet without strategic direction, they have no way of knowing if their actions are connected to the overall business objectives. The results are evident to see. Marketing effectiveness is down, short-termism is up and marketers fail their core task – to increase growth, profits and sales for their brands or clients.

In our 2019 Manifesto, we will argue for a different approach. It is one defined both by its historical success and its future potential: strategy first, tactics later, brand always.

We sincerely hope you will like it.

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STRATEGY FIRST

A FEW WORD CHOICES

Perhaps the most troublesome phenomena that we at Rouser see in modern marketing is the perpetual confusion between strategy and tactics as if they were each other's synonyms. As a result, marketers lose sight of the bigger picture, instead zooming in on minutiae that may or may not be of much use to the wider business. It is akin to trying to build an apartment block without an architectural plan, but a hammer, a couple of nails and a vague idea of the concept of housing. Unfortunately, this apparent lack of strategic savviness practically ensures commercial ineffectiveness and makes the C-suite view marketing as a lightweight function. If the practice is ever to get back to the boardroom, marketers will have to first obtain a holistic understanding of the different levels of strategy and where marketing fits into it.

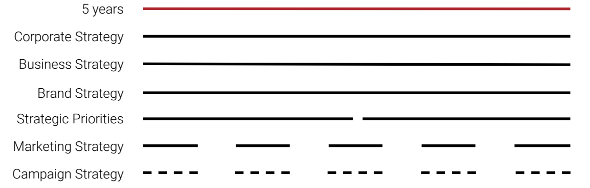
OUTLINING STRATEGY

Many prominent business thinkers have to tried to define, either directly or indirectly, what strategy is. As professor Henry Mintzberg points out in "The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning", people tend to use "strategy" in several different ways, though most commonly: a) as a plan, a "how," a means of getting from here to there, b) as a pattern in actions over time, c) as a position that reflects decisions to offer particular products or services in particular markets, or d) as a perspective, i.e. a vision and direction. Perhaps the most famous strategy guru of them all, professor Michael Porter, argues that strategy is a combination of the ends towards which the firm is striving and the means by which it is seeking to get there.

Admittedly very broadly speaking, most leading authors seem to agree that strategy can be considered a general framework that provides guidance for critical actions to be taken to achieve an end. A necessary precondition for strategic success is, consequently, a clear and widespread understanding of the ends to be obtained. Without these ends in view, action becomes purely tactical and can quickly degenerate into nothing more than a flailing about (which also illustrates the original problem).

However, while all strategies need to keep ends in mind, they will also in practice be more or less detailed and span different time frames. A corporate strategy, which determines the businesses in which a company will compete, will (or, at least, arguably should) inherently be less detailed and more long-term than, say, a campaign strategy. Strategically sound corporations, despite all the recent talk of agility, have a clearly defined long-term strategic destination (end), but realize the folly of trying to predict every detail of every step along the way. Strategies with shorter time frames, on the other hand, can be more prescriptive. Of course, they must still be aware of the general course, lest they take a step in the wrong direction.

At Rouser, we place strategies into what we call a strategy hierarchy:



The timescales above, although simplified for explanatory purposes, demonstrate that the further down the strategy hierarchy ladder one goes, the shorter the time frames in which the strategist is typically required to work and/or the strategy is intended to be executed.

The structure of strategies within the corporate setting is reliant on the hierarchy being maintained. The marketing strategy is subservient to the business strategy, the campaign strategy is subservient to the marketing strategy and so forth. Crucially, however, this does not work the other way around – it puts the proverbial cart before the horse (and this, as it happens, is often how marketing gets in trouble).

The point here is not to go into detail about business strategy, but to illustrate for the marketing oriented reader the need for the discipline of marketing to understand the broader business context. Amazon's success, for example, is not a result of a brilliant marketing strategy, but immense strategic strength across the board.* For modern marketers, being able to a) distinguish between various layers of strategy across a business, and b) understand how their strategy must complement the layers that sit above it, should be a fundamental requirement.

THE CHAIN-LINK EFFECT

Professor Mark Ritson has on several occasions highlighted that the effects of a properly built marketing strategy are multiplicative. As he puts it in his trademark colourful way, “if you fuck up one of the steps, you’re not going to make any money”. This sentiment echoes that of professor Richard Rumelt, who, albeit less colourfully, notes the importance of understanding the parts of an organization that are chain-linked (marketing, arguably, links a substantial part of an organization). When each link is “managed somewhat separately, the system can get stuck in a low-effectiveness state”. To make matter worse, it follows that for a manager in charge of a link of the chain (marketing strategy, for instance), there is less of a point to invest resources in making their link better if other managers are not.

Whilst Ritson was specifically referring to marketing strategy and Rumelt to business strategy, the point is that strength is to be found in a chain-link effect when things complement each other well. For example, having a brilliant communications function and a wonderful production department will inevitably provide positive results. Conversely, having a brilliant communications function and woeful production department would be disastrous. If there has ever been an argument for marketing to understand (and influence) the wider strategic context of a business, this is it.

Notably, however, the chain-link principle also applies *within* departments. If the marketing strategy isn’t linking various marketing department-internal teams, silos will eventually appear and groups start competing against one another for budget space. While this may sound competitively healthy, Goodhart’s Law ensures that it isn’t. For example, e-mail teams might spam customers to get more conversions and, as a result, more budget.

In “The Four”, professor Scott Galloway examines in detail Amazon’s path to success. Its revolutionary timeline of capital allocation, largely possible due to a reshaping of the relationship between company and shareholder (that gives access to exceptionally cheap capital, which allows for investing in high-risk ventures with enormous scalability and equally huge potential payoffs) emanates from immense strategic strength, particularly high up the strategy hierarchy. Critically, the financial room to manoeuvre also provides room to fail. This means Amazon can take chances most others can’t. As a result, Amazon trades at a multiple of profits many times that of an average retailer. The company then ploughs the capital back into the business (minimizing tax in the process), providing it with the funds to invest in, for example, logistics and distribution. Consequently, Amazon now owns warehouses within 20 miles of 45 % of the U.S. population, and recently announced it was leasing twenty Boeing 757s, purchasing tractor trailers and getting into shipping – bolstering its ambition of physical presence within an hour of as many people as possible.

Strategy, in other words, needs to be approached holistically, not in a vacuum. Its true strength is as much influenced by the interplays between the different levels of strategy within an organization and departments, as it is by the individual layers themselves, analogous to Freud’s observations that the real secrets to understanding the human brain are to be found in the synapses; the spaces between neurons.

Far too many corporations keep their strategies locked away as if they were precious secrets. Strategies aren’t for the eyes of senior management only, nor should they be. They’re choices that define what the company is going to do and, as importantly, what it is not going to do. Marketers must know what these choices are in order to help it reach them.

BACK TO THE BOARDROOM

By expanding their strategic savoir-faire, marketers increase the chances of marketing making it back to the boardroom and a tilt of the dial back in favour of the profession to influence and strengthen the wider business approach. Perhaps the greatest step toward such a shift is ensuring we remind ourselves occasionally what marketing strategy is.

Within this context, the strategic process typically involves performing diagnostics, creating an approach based on the insights learned (that also provides guidance for subsequent actions) and, finally, identifying an appropriate set of tactics. Or, to put it more specifically:

- ✓ Research, analysis and, potentially, segmentation of the market in order to identify market attitudes, behaviours and the most basic meaningful differences between prospective buyers.
- ✓ Definition of brand positioning and distinctive assets to strengthen in the minds of prospective buyers.
- ✓ Based on financial factors, definition of limits to category reach (thereby prospective buyers to target and, implicitly, to ignore).**
- ✓ Identification of specific and actionable objectives, the potential value of which should be clearly established.
- ✓ Objective selection of tactics that most effectively and efficiently achieve the set objectives.
- ✓ Analysis and evaluation of performance.

***Not to be confused with reach through media.*

Fundamentally, these steps can only be strengthened by understanding the broader strategic context of a business. As we have seen, brand and marketing strategies are subservient to business and brand strategies respectively. Consequently, marketers should ensure that they know them, not only to stay consistent and avoid conflicting goals within the corporate structure, but also to discover new sources of power. If, for instance, part of the business strategy is to heavily invest in distribution infrastructure (as in Amazon's case), the consequences for marketing could be enormous, e.g. from shorter and cheaper delivery time than competitors'.

If marketing is to prove its worth and be taken seriously, an essential first step is for marketers to study their businesses and start looking upwards the strategy hierarchy. Not only will it ensure a greater understanding of the corporate context, it will also help them stay true to brand, select and relevantly measure appropriate tactics.

LIMITING STRATEGIC RISK

On any journey to commercial success, strategy defines both the pathway to take and, as a result, the roads not to be travelled. Subsequent tactics make up the means with which we are to get to where we are headed — the shoes on our feet or the horse in front of the cart. Importantly, the relationship does not work the other way around; as we saw, it puts the cart in front of the horse and even if it were to push the cart forward, it would not have any idea of where it was going, its view obfuscated by the wagon before it.

Yet the reality of business is inherently complex and, as a result, strategic choice is risky. Knowing beforehand precisely how choices will turn out is impossible. It is for this reason that the first step of any strategic process must be one of information-gathering, so as to limit uncertainty and reduce risk. In a complex and competitive industry setting, there are no guarantees of success, but it is possible to improve the *odds of success* by ensuring that one makes as few assumptions as possible. Frequently forgotten, this includes both the outside (market, customers, rivals, technologies, and so forth) and the inside (causal ambiguity relating to internal capabilities).

Of course, this is no revolutionary truth — Occam's razor states that when presented with competing hypotheses to solve a problem, one should select the solution with the fewest assumptions — but it remains true nonetheless.

The more assumptions made, the more potential points of failure and opportunities to be wrong. There is a significant difference between being 90% correct 90% of the time and being 100% correct 10% of the time. Or to put it differently: assumptions may lead one to be largely right, but also hugely wrong.

> “There is a significant difference between being 90% correct 90% of the time, and being 100% correct 10% of the time.”

An important key to removing assumptions is acknowledging our propensity towards them in the first place. No matter how certain of the contrary one may be, we all view the world subjectively through lenses that have evolved across millennia and, as a result, are psychologically primed to gravitate towards easy-to-understand answers with the speed at which they fit our personal narratives. Unfortunately, this inherent desire to provide a seemingly coherent direction to events may lead us to see patterns that don't exist, infer causes incorrectly and ignore facts that don't fit the story – we are unquestionably susceptible to narrative fallacies, confirmation biases, illusory superiority, clustering illusions and halo effects. While this affects how we interpret information, we can decrease the degree to which results are skewed: by valuing data over anecdotes, quantifiable experience over generic advice and critical thinking over alluring promises.

STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

Life is the sum of all our choices, as Albert Camus once wrote. By extrapolation, history equals the accumulated choices of all mankind. Indeed, no matter who we were, are or will be, from the moment we wake up until the second we fall asleep, our days were, are and will be filled with decisions.

Many of them, even in the corporate setting in which we act, are mundane. Others are anything but, their implications, positive or negative, potentially enormous.

All ultimately boil down to an either-or decision – either we decide to do something, or we do not. While decision implies an end to deliberation and the beginning of action, remaining undecided is no less a choice, one of inaction over action.

Every strategic choice carries a consequential cost in the form of opportunity lost from paths not taken. For this very reason, the essence of strategy is one of sacrifice.* Choices made define the company, for better or worse.

The key to business success is not doing things well, but doing things better than one's competitors, which typically comes down to superior decision-making (luck, i.e. randomness in one's favour, notwithstanding). However, this is considerably more difficult than many (want to) realize. Companies that follow the same best practices not only inevitably end up in the same place – the best possible outcome being one of a tie – but become predictable. Winning consequently requires one to challenge the status quo and trying the angle that others haven't. A strategic paradox is thus created whereby the approach that brings a higher chance of success also carries a higher risk of failure.

> "The key to business success is not doing things well, but doing things better than one's competitors."

Yet when performance is relative, and payoffs are highly skewed, standing still is the riskiest move of all. Curiosity killed the cat, but complacency kills companies. Failure to act, as Phil Rosenzweig once wrote, is a greater sin than acting and failing, because action brings at least a possibility of success, whereas inaction brings none.

**This conclusion has been reached, though phrased somewhat differently, by many strategists throughout history (if, perhaps, most famously by David Ogilvy and Michael Porter, respectively). However, it remains one of the most misunderstood within business discourse. Sacrifices are, as a rule, made implicitly, not explicitly, simply because they do not have to be. By explicitly deciding to manufacture only a sports car, one implicitly decides not to (at that time) manufacture an SUV. Somewhere down the line, one may explicitly decide to also manufacture an SUV, but by doing so implicitly decide not to (at that time) manufacture a hatchback. To explicitly define every single thing one will not do would be an endless, and therefore pointless, exercise.*

Naturally, as with any supposed rule, there are exceptions and caveats. When decisions are large, complex and difficult to undo, there will be an inevitable premium on getting the decision right.

Under those circumstances, it may be better to err on the side of caution to ensure avoidance of a mistake with potentially devastating long-term consequences. But stand still for too long and the competition will catch up, overtake and extend their lead.

The relative skill with which one balances action, caution, risk and opportunity will define whether the brand thrives, survives or dies.

TACTICS LATER

TACTICS LATER

NOT SO GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Ogilvy Vice Chairman and all-around UK national treasure, Rory Sutherland, famously tells a story about how one of his friends was told by an executive that marketing was “the colouring-in department”. The quote is as revealing as it is uncomfortable to marketers – there is undoubtedly at least a grain of truth to it.

Far too many modern marketers lack formal training, which often, on one hand, means that they fail to understand the broader scope of business and how marketing fits into the corporate puzzle. On the other, it also often means that they do not understand the very basics of what they are doing. Strategy is ignored. Real-time optimization replaces long-term planning. Marketing tactics become marketing communications and, well, little else.

Consequently, one cannot in good conscious blame the C-suite for taking not only strategy but also key tactics such as product development, distribution, price setting, price maintenance and customer experience off the marketing department’s table. Of course, this is not ideal for the overall business outcome. As we have seen, marketing needs to be imbued by a holistic approach in order to deliver optimum results. Inevitably, that will sometimes mean that tactics other than marcomms need to be applied. Despite how much marketers are inclined to think otherwise.

A GOOD PLACE TO START

In 1979, psychologists Michael Ross and Fiore Sicoly conducted a study called “Egocentric Biases in Availability and Attribution”. In their research, they noticed that human beings had a tendency to overvalue their contribution to a positive outcome. Of course, marketers are no exception to this rule. So perhaps it is rather unsurprising to see that they often overestimate the impact they had on the success of a particular brand or product.

An example of this can be found in “A New Brand World” by Scott Bedbury, the marketer often attributed with the success of brands such as Nike and Starbucks.

On Starbucks, Bedbury writes: “Perhaps even more critically, cracking Starbuck’s brand code provided us with a rationale for forgoing opportunities, appealing as they might have been, that were not closely linked to our evolving conception of the brand”.

In this, as we have noted in the previous section on strategy, Bedbury is right. The core of strategy, as professor Michael Porter once said, is deciding what not to do.

However, he goes on to write about how the CEO had come to the conclusion that they were now “not in the coffee business serving people”, but rather “in the people business serving coffee”. From this, Bedbury deduces that Starbucks was “well on its way to transcending the cup, to going far beyond the physical domain of the product” and that the employees were delivering “something more rewarding than just a cup of coffee”.

Without being in any way disrespectful to Bedbury, at this point he, being largely responsible for the Starbucks brand, seemingly falls into the aforementioned egocentric bias trap and what one might call *post-effect emotionalization*. As probable as he is to argue otherwise, the main driver of the coffee chain’s success was considerably more likely something else.

As professor Byron Sharp established in “How Brands Grow”, brands compete on mental and physical availability. Mental availability refers to the ease with which a consumer notices and/or remembers a brand in a purchase situation. Physical availability is about making the brand easy to find and buy. Without it, efforts to create mental availability will be ineffective, if not completely wasted.

When Americans, as Sharp aptly put it, at last joined the rest of the developed world in drinking espresso-based coffees, Starbucks "rode the wave well, rightly focusing on opening new stores rather than advertising". As it turns out, they eventually overplayed their hand, had to close a few stores and begin advertising to maintain market share. Undoubtedly, however, the likely key to their initial success was that they had a nice store on every corner, selling a nice cup of coffee, at an acceptable price and nobody else did. Not that Starbucks were "transcending the cup" into what would later become a whole lot of nonsensical laddering statements concerning brand purpose (that, (in)famously, haven't prevented well-publicized incidents over the years).

Product, price and place (to use the original P designations, even though they may be considered a tad simplistic by modern standards) deal with physical availability and, as such, need to be considered in any marketing mix.* While many marketers, for reasons alluded to at the beginning of this section, admittedly may struggle to dictate the setup of a distribution chain, they need to at the very least be aware of it, or their next office shipment may indeed contain crayons. That, of course, requires them to understand strategy, which also brings us to communications.

ON COMMUNICATIONS AND JEOPARDY (NO, NOT THE DOUBLE VARIETY)

Undeniably, a large part of modern marketing discourse revolves around communications despite it being a very small part of the overall marketing puzzle. Some of it, as we have alluded to earlier, may be down to marketers not being trusted with much else, and some of it may be down to marketers simply not knowing better. One can only speculate as to what first led to what. Either way, communications is a tactical area in which a lack of strategic competency is very easily spotted.

Marketing strategy is inherently media neutral. It is not until it has been defined and the objectives have been set that the best and most cost-effective ways of reaching said objectives can be identified. Unfortunately, as fundamental as this may sound (and indeed is), many brands fail the exercise. Media biases instead come into play, often to the detriment of the brand. As Upton Sinclair once remarked, getting someone to understand something when their salary depends upon them not understanding it is difficult. Clearly, there are financial incentives for not embracing external interpretations of, for example, what effectiveness is or certain measurements of it. To illustrate, it stands to reason that someone who has an incentive to buy or sell digital media is not only likely to promote a definition of effectiveness that is close to efficiency, they are also likely to promote multi touch attribution models.

> "Clearly, there are financial incentives for not embracing external interpretations of what effectiveness is or certain measurements of it."

As a result, companies often find themselves unsure of the best course of action and it is by no means limited to low-maturity brands. For example, Adidas' CEO Kasper Rorsted in 2018 stated that "Digital engagement is key for [us]; you don't see any TV advertising anymore", and that he would subsequently put all his money into digital media.

With the statement, he effectively limited his company's chances for future success and turned its marketing into a game of Jeopardy. He had his digital answer. What was the question again?

Marketing must take the opposite approach to make financial sense. Again, not until the objectives have been defined can the best ways of reaching them be identified, which means that anyone claiming to be "digital-first" demonstrates a lack of strategic competence.

At this point someone might argue that Rorsted had already done his strategy and that Adidas decided digital would provide the best tool for the job. However, there are a couple of basic errors that indicate that not to be the case. As it happens, they are the same errors that we see on a daily basis: (1) underuse of multiple-media approaches at the cost of potential synergy effects and effectiveness, and (2) overinvestment in short-term activation at the expense of brand-building efforts to the detriment of the brand's profitability.

**It should also be noted that small brands aren't exempt from these rules and here digital may provide a promising tool. Direct to consumer sales, for example, come with a lower threshold. Large and convenience retailers require scale that new entrants often cannot deliver. Consequently, even if they are able to secure an opportunity in traditional channels, they are typically unable to meet the requirements of widespread distribution, as has been noted by, among others, the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute.*

PERCEPTION VS REALITY

Rorsted's actions are indicative of one of the most unfortunate, yet common, phenomena in modern marketing discourse: the traditional-digital dichotomy and the attitude towards what is deemed traditional media channels. Not only is it troublesome because the division ignores development in technology – the so-called traditional channels are today all to various degrees digital, which begs the question what *wouldn't* be digital media – but also because it leaves untapped marketing potential on the table.

A study published by Ebiquity in 2018 illustrates the problem. More than 100 marketers from both brand and agency sides were asked to rank media channels on twelve different attributes, including targeting capabilities, highest Return on Marketing Investment, best for emotional response and most likely to increase brand salience.

Overall weighted score - all 12 attributes combined

What the evidence says

1	TV	107.1
2	Radio	103.2
3	Newspapers	87.8
4	Magazines	79.5
5	Out of home	71.7
6	Direct mail	67
7	Social media	65.8
8	Cinema	61.4
9	Online video	57.6
10	Online display	50

Evidence: based on sum of scores for all 12 attributes with importance weights applied.

What the advertisers and agencies say

1	TV	48.9
2	Online video	41.6
3	Social media	41.3
4	Out of home	39.6
5	Cinema	39.1
6	Radio	38.9
7=	Newspapers	36.3
8=	Direct mail	36.3
9	Online display	35.5
10	Magazines	35.1

Perception: Based on sum of mean score across all 12 attributes with importance weights applied. Base n=116 (each respondent rated 2 attributes).

As one can see, there are clear discrepancies between perception and reality.

TV remains the undisputed champion of effectiveness.* IPA data suggests that TV increases overall business effectiveness by around 40 % and has a particularly strong effect on market share (which, of course, is key to brand growth and profit). It should also be noted that this is not a budget effect.**

Print is, as the study clearly shows, considered a particularly antiquated medium, but again the data shows that it has value. Campaigns that include press tend to be more effective than those that don't. Much like TV, share of voice analysis shows that it is not a budget effect.

Radio provides great reach and, as a result, continues to be an effective medium. Again, it is not a budget effect. Radio increases share of voice efficiency significantly.

In other words, the so-called traditional media channels, as much as columnists and commentators would have one believe otherwise, still make a strong case for investment.

Form of advertising	% of total ad-generated profit (3 yrs)	Average ad-generated total profit ROI	Total ad-generated profit likelihood	% of short-term profit (3-6 mths)	Average ad-generated short-term profit ROI	Short-term ad-generated profit likelihood
All media	1	3,24	0,72	1	1,51	0,58
TV	0,71	4,2	0,86	0,62	1,73	0,7
Print	0,18	2,43	0,78	0,22	1,44	0,61
Online video	0,04	2,35	0,67	0,05	1,21	0,52
Radio	0,03	2,09	0,75	0,05	1,61	0,62
Out of home	0,03	1,15	0,48	0,03	0,57	0,19
Online display	0,01	0,84	0,4	0,02	0,82	0,37

Source: 'Profit Ability: the business case for advertising', Nov 2017 | Ebiquity & Gain Theory

Yet perception becomes reality and marketers shift their money to digital and online (some of which may be explained by the fact that digital advertising in general and the programmatic sphere in particular is more profitable for agencies, as mentioned previously). As a result, average effectiveness (as measured in IPA case studies as the number of very large business effects reported) has fallen to its lowest ever level on a ten-year rolling basis. Digital is proving to make traditional channels more effective (TV, print and radio are working better than ever, and out-of-home is on the rise due to the prevalence of digital-out-of-home), but digital on its own is anything but.

This is all not to say that what is usually called digital channels would not, or cannot, be good. Rather, our point is that brands should identify the media that will best help them reach their objectives. They may well be digital, but they could also be traditional. More often than not though, they will be both, as it typically ensures the best result for business. Ample data is available to show that multi-channel campaigns are more effective than single-channel ones. While we do not intend to go into detail about campaign structure – there are plenty of media agencies who are experts in the field – brands need to at least be aware of the fundamentals before executing a strategy. Much like how tactics each have their strengths and weaknesses, so do channels, and brands can pick and choose depending on what they are trying to achieve, who they are trying to reach and what their budgets are. But there is also incremental increase in ROI to be found by simply adding channels, at least up to four.***

**Effectiveness here defined, as by Les Binet and Peter Field, as scale of effect, measured in whatever terms are relevant to the context. It typically refers to the number of large effects or share growth. It does not relate the effect to the level of investment made to drive the effect. Efficiency, on the other hand, is a measure of what is achieved per unit of investment made. Return on marketing investment (ROMI) is a common efficiency metric.*

***Of course, budget may still provide a threshold, particularly for new and small brands. Cash flow limitations can, and very often do, take TV completely off the table.*

****Multiple-media repetition has been shown to generate more positive cognitive responses, attitudes toward brand and higher purchase intention than single-medium repetition. A 2011 IPA study on the UK market showed diminishing returns after four platforms. A more extensive 2016 Advertising Research Foundation study of the US market found that two platforms added 19% ROI, three platforms +23%, four platforms +31% and five platforms +51%. A ThinkTV study of the Australian market in 2017 also found the sweet spot to be five platforms. Either way, synergy effects from multiple-media approaches are evident in the data.*

TACTICAL EFFECTIVENESS AND THE PERVERSE INCENTIVE OF SHORT-TERM TACTICS

An essential aspect brands must be aware of, we would argue not only in communication but in general, is the balance between short-term activation and long-term brand-building – getting it right is crucial for maximum commercial effectiveness. Spend too little on brand building and the results from activation will be less than stellar. Spend too little on activation and your brand, as strong as it may be, will never been exploited to the full. Brands need to both create memories and activate them, or, to put it differently, both water the tree and pick the fruit. The optimum balance between the two, according to Les Binet and Peter Fields' seminal "The Long and the Short of it" study, is around 60 % on brand and 40 % on activation. That's 60 % long-term and 40 % short-term. Every brand is unique and there are differences from one vertical to the next, naturally, but the rule provides a good rule of thumb grounded in solid, if perhaps somewhat limited, research.

Yet it's not even close to what most brands do. For a multitude of reasons – CMO tenure (or lack thereof), VC ROI demands, strategic shortcomings, agencies incentivised to push digital, to name but a few – we are instead seeing overinvestments in immediate returns and bottom-funnel conversions. The problem with the approach is that while long-term strategies always provide short-term results, short-term tactics practically never have long-term benefits. In fact, due to their nature, they tend to erode brand equity.

This means that in the quest for sales uplifts, the very foundation of long-term sales growth is undermined and the very point of the brand itself lost. A perverse incentive is created, i.e. an incentive that has an unintended and undesirable result which is contrary to the interests of the incentive makers.

Nowhere is this more clearly on display than in the world of digital, perhaps rather unsurprisingly given the undeniable activation potential of digital channels.

Big data allows brands and agencies to target potential customers with greater precision than ever. The internet is, by and large, a perfect channel for delivering information on products and prices, and combined with mobile it can drastically hasten the customer journey. With purchases only a click away and a smartphone practically in every pocket, activation has never been more efficient. Purely online brands are almost twice as likely to be short-term focused as purely offline brands.*

But, as the Binet and Field study "Media in Focus" shows, measuring success in the short-term leads to numerous important false conclusions about effectiveness. Very large market share effects were reported in only 3 % of the analysed short-term cases. For cases exceeding 30 months, it was 38 %. Long-term cases (6 months or more) drove 460 % more market share growth than short-term cases did.

This weakness in short-term campaigns, Binet and Field argue, is ignored because of activation effects. 65 % of short-term cases generated very large activation effects, as compared to 33 % of 3+ year cases. If one, for reasons explained above, measures success in the short-term by activation effects, it would appear as if short-term campaigns are highly effective. However, look at the bigger, long-term picture and they are revealed to be highly ineffective.

"A perverse incentive is created, i.e. an incentive that has an unintended and undesirable result which is contrary to the interests of the incentive makers."

Some of this is down to the suboptimal media choices that we have discussed previously. With few exceptions, media fall to one side or the other of the short-long divide, i.e. their addition to a campaign schedule promotes either long-term effects or short-term effects, rarely both. When it comes to digital, short-term is its forte. Digital metrics are strongly oriented to the short-term, but the point also applies to, for example, direct mail and sales promotions. In order to rectify the issue, it is imperative that brands use metrics to evaluate that are appropriate for the strategic intent.

**This could potentially be explained by their lack of maturity, scale and cash flow – one must first survive today to be able to thrive tomorrow. As the brands secure stable finances, however, they should seek to balance their spend.*

EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGICALLY RELEVANT KPIS

The, above all else, key issue with current effectiveness discourse is that there are no universally agreed-upon terms. Where there is a lack of defined verbiage, there is room for perception to outmaneuver reality, and for a gap to appear.

According to the 2018 Nielsen CMO report, social media and search were perceived as having the highest effectiveness of all channels, with 69% of respondents (in each case) claiming they were either "extremely" or "very" effective. A mere 43% considered TV to be effective.

In reality, as we have seen, TV is the most effective media channel on the planet by quite some distance, at least by the definition of effectiveness used by Binet and Field – and, by extension, this paper. But if there is no consensus on what is meant by effectiveness, how there can be one on what communications options, or tactics in general, are most effective?

Any effectiveness effort, consequently, must start with the establishment of a framework. Not until we have defined what we mean can we identify and agree upon what is required to measure and forecast.

The definition should be tailored to the individual company and relevant not only to marketing but also the wider business strategy. Alignment acts as a step toward management buy-in; marketing measurement in practice is often about validating work to people who don't believe in it. Getting the finance department on board throughout the process, and ensuring that the marketing effectiveness targets set are aligned with the overall needs, will build organizational credibility.

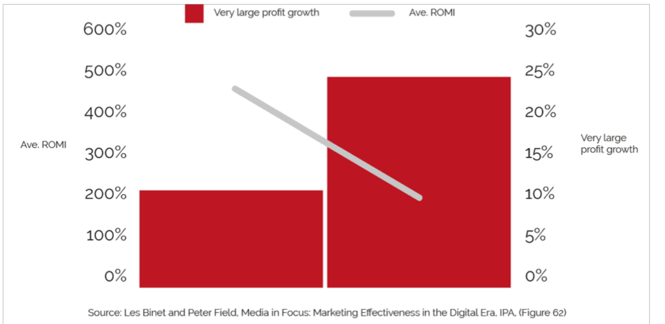
Additionally, an established effectiveness framework will help prevent silo formations. Organizations, as we have established in the section on strategy, are chain-linked. To reiterate: when each link is managed separately, not only does the company tend to get stuck in a low-effectiveness state, but there are fewer incentives for managers to invest resources in making their link better if other managers are not. Some management teams try to counteract this by awarding budget relative to performance, but end up invoking Goodhart's Law. A framework prevents such scenarios, and for organizations that are active across international markets, it improves compliance. If local branches are held to the same established process, there is far less risk that they ignore global directives.

The next step is to identify a benchmark metric that is appropriate for the strategic intent. The goal of effectiveness is to create a clear understanding of what is and isn't happening, and a leading KPI allows for more accurate testing.

Measuring too many things at once is not only expensive, but often leads to contradicting data and analysis paralysis. Of course, proxies and alternative models can be used to solidify the benchmark, but it is important not to use data the way a drunk uses a lamppost – for support rather than illumination.

It is imperative that the effectiveness benchmark metric takes the long-term into consideration, which means focusing on things other than ROMI. Any marketer looking to spend company money will have return demands thrust upon them whether they like it or not, but measuring effectiveness through efficiency leads, as we have seen, to numerous false conclusions and a dangerous bias towards the short-term. Not only is there is clear incompatibility between maximising efficiency and maximising effectiveness, by measuring the latter using the former one gravely undermines the long-term profitability potential of the brand.

ROMI-focused activities often target consumers with established affiliations to the brand and imminent purchase intentions at the cost of brand growth, long-term base sales and margins. Long-term activities, inversely, invest in attracting future customers at a cost to short-term ROMI. Consequently, ROMI often correlates negatively with penetration, which is key to market share gains. In a marketing world in which, according to the aforementioned Ebiquity study, ROMI is considered the second most important attribute of an advertising medium, this is important to realize.



Source: Les Binet and Peter Field, Media in Focus: Marketing Effectiveness in the Digital Era, IPA, (Figure 62)

Focusing on ROI can prevent benefits from scale and larger, more secure, profits. If brands are to stay profitable, they must avoid attempts to project forward short-term effects to long-term growth.

BRAND
ALWAYS

BRAND ALWAYS

DEFINING BRAND

Today, definitions and descriptions of exactly what makes up brand tend to range from the scientific to the obscure and everything in-between. The problem with most, however, is that they fail to encompass every key trait of brands – they are far too narrow and can therefore be close to irrelevant depending on context. For example, if one were to ask a neuromarketing expert, they might claim that brand is a complex mental construct that corresponds to a number of regions of the brain that, when exposed with relevant stimuli, can activate neurological activity in a network of cortical areas. Scientifically accurate, but far from helpful for anyone looking for actionable advice on how to build one.

On the other end of the spectrum, one finds people such as Kevin Roberts, former CEO of Saatchi and Saatchi, who has suggested that brands are outdated and that we might need a replacement for the traditional concepts. In his book "Lovemarks", Roberts proposes that "brands attract respect, even lasting respect, but without love". Lovemarks, he instead argues, "command both respect and love", which is "achieved through the trinity of mystery, sensuality and intimacy". Slightly more helpful to our prospective brand-builder, perhaps, but alas significantly lacking in supporting evidence, scientific or otherwise.

Perhaps the best definition to date was made by the late professor Al Achenbaum. Long before his time, he suggested that what distinguishes a brand from its unbranded commodity counterpart and gives it its equity is the sum total of consumers' perceptions and feelings about a product's attributes, about how it performs, about the brand name and about the company associated with producing it. In other words, Achenbaum argued that brands: (1) are the opposites of commodities, (2) can have equity and, finally, (3) that what gives brands their equity is, basically, everything.

The brilliance of the description lies in its simplicity and openness, particularly given that brands are, as former Chairman of J. Walter Thompson Jeremy Bullmore once put it, "fiendishly complicated, elusive, slippery, half-real, half-virtual things". Still, it remains far from universally accepted.

SUGGESTED MODELS

What at least can be established with certainty is that definitions of brands are plentiful and highly varied. The point, however, is not to debate what individual interpretation of brand is closest to the truth (or, perhaps, furthest from nonsense), but rather to highlight that brands tend to be defined in terms that are of most practical use to the person defining them and, crucially, the context of the conversation in which the brand in question is being discussed. To formulate it slightly differently: theoretical brand models often differ in value depending on the problem the creator is trying to solve.

For example, Phil Barden, expert in the field of consumer science, argues in "Decoded" that the "pain of price" activates the same regions of the brain that are associated with physical pain (meaning that, yes, paying literally hurts). Purchases, then, would be dependent on the relationship between reward and pain and for a positive decision to be made, rewards must exceed a certain threshold. Or, to put it more succinctly in Barden's terms: net value = reward – pain.

Apple, to take a popular example, has managed to exceed this pain threshold. Despite controlling but 19.7 % volume market share (of the global smartphone market through its iPhone models), the company seized 87 % of the profits. Their products, and every touchpoint through which you encounter Apple, are designed to increase what is sometimes called premiumisation (value share) and the reward side of the equation in order to null the pain of paying over $1000 for a smartphone that inevitably will be outdated in 18 months' time.

"Theoretical brand models often differ in value depending on the problem the creator is trying to solve."

The (net value = reward – pain) model proposed by Barden is essential to understanding how consumers interpret price, which in turn can have a dramatic effect on a brand's positioning, packaging, retail, overall customer experience and so forth. In theory, it means that it could be possible to get a certain (and exceedingly affluent) segment of a household hygiene market to pay $1.3 million for a single pack of toilet roll – as long as the reward side of the equation was high enough.*

Of course, the brand also needs to be clearly distinctive from its competitors. While Barden argues that there is meaning in distinctiveness (at least on a subconscious level), others argue that there doesn't have to be. Professors Jenni Romaniuk and Byron Sharp of the Ehrenberg-Bass institute, creators of the concept of distinctive brand assets, claim meaningless distinctiveness is a much wiser investment for brands to pursue, being that the fundamental function of branding is to ease the identification of the product or service amongst competitors. Consumers, they argue, rarely stop to think about whether the logo looks nice, trustworthy, or conveys any other connotation. Consequently, one should focus on qualities that distinguish the brand in the form of "distinctive elements" that help consumers notice, recall and recognize it in advertising and buying situations (i.e. mental availability, as mentioned in the Tactics section).

> "McDonald's is in part successful because it is very good at not being totally shit."
>
> Rory Sutherland

Either way, the implications of understanding the model are profound. Removing or changing important brand-activating elements carries obvious risks, as famous redesign failures illustrate. When Tropicana orange juice "redesigned" its range, it lost its distinctive assets, something that cost the company an estimated $30 million in lost sales in just two months.

In 2013, an Australian brand called The Toilet Paper Man launched, and reportedly sold, a three-ply roll made from gold woven into tissue that had taken four years to make and was delivered with a bottle of champagne.

Brands can demand a very high premium when both exceeding the pain threshold and being distinctive. In Sweden, iconic brand Solstickan excels at it. The company has built enough brand equity over time to provide such a high reward that it can command a price for its two-pack of dishcloths that retails at almost eight times the category average. Of course, it has very distinctive assets in its logo and packaging as well.

The established reward and distinctive assets also lead to a third function of brand, namely that consumers use them to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty.

In "Skin in the Game", professor Nassim Taleb discusses an insight from Rory Sutherland, in which he explains that "when there are a few choices, McDonald's appears to be a safe bet. It is also a safe bet in shady places with few regulars where the food variance from exceptional can be consequential." – or, as Sutherland himself puts it, "McDonald's is in part successful because it is very good at not being totally shit". In other words, consumers are aware they will not get the best meal on the planet, but they can rest assured they will not get a bad one, so they satisfice. The point echoes the views of professor Rumelt, who has previously stated that a brand's value comes from guaranteeing certain characteristics of a product. However, it presumes a track record (reward/certainty) and distinctive assets (logo, colours etc.).

HOW BRANDS WORK

- On a psychological level, a brand is the sum total of interactions customers have with a product and service, defined in particular by the residue these experiences leave behind in our minds – both the emotional and rational imprints – which are, in part, used to evaluate the proposed pain of price for a product or service.

- On a perceptual level, brands are a collection of stimuli (distinctive assets – icons, colours, jingles etc.) that are employed to make products easier to notice, understand and buy.

- On an risk-reduction level, a brand assists consumers in making decisions under conditions of uncertainty by ensuring certain characteristics of a product.

THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET, BUT POTENTIAL GOLD

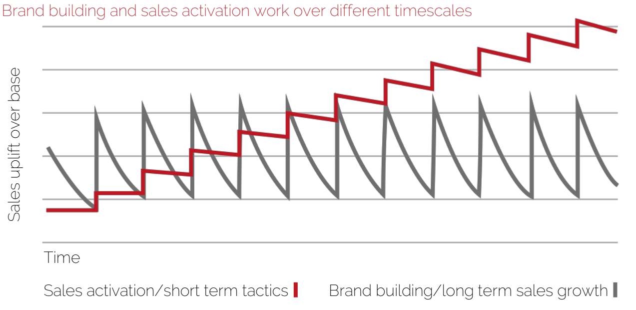
The three 'models' illustrate our original point: a rigid, universal description of brand, that can be used with precision in every condition, exists only in fantasy. Formulating an overly fixed view could also possibly neglect some of the more nuanced points that can be found within the discourse. Having access to multiple schools of thought should liberate marketers, not contain them. A potential compromise for the future may be to adopt a more fluid definition of brand that incorporates elements of the three models mentioned above (and others), but allows for application in different measures depending on the question and situation at hand.

The financial argument for doing so is strong. While the most useful definition of what a brand is largely depends on the context (as do, it would seem, the best drivers of brand equity), the potential business value of brand is easier to measure. That's not to say it is easy to provide an exact total value, as is demonstrated on an annual basis when companies attempt to value brands and inevitably get it wrong. Because it is practically impossible to put a price on a customer's perceptions, the valuation rankings have to rely on unsolicited calculations of financial brand values without access to the most relevant internal information. Consequently, the lists are significantly more helpful to the valuation firms' own marketing efforts than to anyone looking for relevant and actionable advice for how to handle their day-to-day strategic decisions and brand management. Either way, how much the brand is worth on a hypothetical balance sheet is, in this context, less important than its value in having an impact on day-to-day financial performance.

The potential value of brand is, regardless, notable. For one, it can provide a competitive advantage. If one competes on price alone, the threshold to be replaced is low - all it takes is one competitor to offer an identical product cheaper. Similarly, if one competes on product alone, the threshold to be replaced is low – all it takes is for one competitor to create a better product or, again, and identical product cheaper. Brand increases the threshold significantly.

Furthermore, as BBH London's Tom Roach has written, having a strong brand betters one's chances of being chosen over competitors and attract more customers, at a lower cost per sale. Because of brand equity, these customers are also more willing to pay a premium.

This, of course, can have a large impact on business. Building brands will, as Binet and Field have demonstrated, increase long-term profitability, margins, baseline sales and decrease price sensitivity.



In other words, brand continuously delivers more revenue, profit and growth more efficiently, which generates shareholder value, and the effects are not limited to B2C. Academic research has established, among other things, that even in B2B, branding has had a positive effect on perceived product quality (Cretu & Brodie, 2007) and increases the likelihood of a product to be added to a bid list and command premium price (Low & Blois, 2002; Michell et. al. 2001; Ohnemus, 2009; Wise & Zednickova, 2009) while decreasing likelihood of competitors' offerings being selected (Low & Blois, 2002; Ohnemus, 2009) and heightening the barrier to entry for competitors (Michell et. al. 2001). Brand equity also conveys a number of intangible benefits to buyers, including increasing the buyer's confidence in the product (Michell et. al. 2001), their satisfaction with the purchase decision (Low & Blois, 2002) and reducing the level of perceived risk and uncertainty (Bengtsson & Servais, 2005; Mudambi, 2002; Ohnemus, 2009).

"Building brands will, as Binet and Field have demonstrated, increase long-term profitability, margins, baseline sales and decrease price sensitivity."

Rather unsurprisingly, studies say that strong brands can capture, on average, three times the sales volume of weak brands, though it should be noted that any company with three times the sales of its competitors will be considered a strong(er) brand. It may be, to paraphrase Dave Trott, that brands can be considered (alongside creativity) the last legal unfair advantage, but recognizing these potential benefits is one thing. It is a completely different matter to realize them. As it happens, this takes one back to strategy. The key is to understand how one's brand strategy enhances and enables the overall business strategy. Brand effects are notoriously difficult to measure and are smaller in the short-term. However, they also decay away more slowly. In the long run, brand effects are the main driver of marketing-led growth. As such, they need to be put into a higher hierarchical level and time frame.

AND WHAT ABOUT BRAND PURPOSE?

Most modern marketers are well aware of the growing popularity of brand purpose and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The "golden circles" – an idea popularized by Simon Sinek – (in)famously suggested that "people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it." It would be ignorant to suggest that this type of buying (motivated primarily by purpose) never happens. However, evidence suggests quite conclusively that this is the exception, not the norm. Every now and then, a report arises that states something to the tone of "X percentage of consumers said they would buy a brand that represents Y", giving credence to the idea that brands do in fact need to stand for something greater than themselves. Unfortunately, what consumers say in response to surveys doesn't necessarily reflect how they typically behave. As David Ogilvy once said, consumers don't think how they feel. They don't say what they think and they don't do what they say. Humans have a propensity toward virtue signaling, answering when questioned what they believe to be "correct" regardless of whether or not they actually hold those values in practice. When it is their own money on the line, purchase patterns show it's a different matter entirely; survey radicals turn into economic conservatives.

Furthermore, while social preferences undoubtedly are an inherent aspect of consumption, the causes that matter most on an individual level differ greatly. In order to appeal to as many of their potential buyers as possible, brands inevitably end up with a lowest common denominator. This, in turn, means that there is no differentiation, and rather than be voices for good, they become echoes of one another. From a positioning perspective, brand purpose becomes pointless.

To make matter worse, the supposed evidence for brand purpose as an indicator for future success has been proven to be severely flawed and ostensibly a systemic delusion resulting in a halo effect. Though proponents often claim that their views are based on rigorous research, they operate mainly on the level of storytelling.

> "Consumers don't think how they feel. They don't say what they think and they don't do what they say."
>
> David Ogilvy

In April 2017, Richard Shotton published a top-line overview of a piece of research he had undertaken examining the statistics that are regularly regurgitated to support brand purpose — those from Jim Stengel's "Grow". The basic premise of the book is that companies with an ideal at their heart see share price growth far in excess of those lacking such values. In summary, Shotton's research demonstrated numerous fundamental flaws in the methodology of the original study, which in turn called into question many of the proposed "findings". To paraphrase, despite its popularity, there is no evidence that brand purpose delivers success.

Motivating brand purpose, which is inherently altruistic, with ROI also creates an ethical Catch 22. The moment one does it, any and all altruism is undermined to the point where one cannot any longer call the purpose altruistic. It also insinuates that brands would do the opposite if it were simply better for business (brand "unpurpose", as professor Mark Ritson famously once called it). While this may sound far-fetched, it is quite demonstrably what many of the so-called purpose-led companies do when it comes to paying tax or, rather, not paying tax.

PURPOSE POTENTIAL

Importantly, this is all not to say that brand purpose cannot work, nor that one should not do brand purpose if one genuinely believes in a cause or stance, merely that there is no evidence to suggest it leads to performance increases.

Leaving the brand aside, there are hypothetical uses of purpose in a strictly organizational sense, i.e. when implemented as a guiding philosophy for a business (upheld in its business strategy). To illustrate, in "Obliquity", professor John Kay provides numerous examples of businesses that have managed to achieve a set goal obliquely, in contrast to the more explicit "maximize shareholder value" approach. Kay argues that by approaching problems indirectly, businesses can distil a High Level Objective (purpose/mission/vision in the current context) into a series of Intermittent Goals (which they can, to some degree, influence) and Specific Tasks (that are achievable). In this respect, purpose may help a business focus on a common high level objective. However, it needs to take priority over business outcome, which of course is a lot easier said than done in today's market climate.

It should also be noted that purpose used in such a way borders an implementation of corporate culture. Much like with strategy, the essence of culture is one of deciding what not to do.

> "A purpose is clearly not enough by itself to guarantee success neither in marketing nor management."

Consequently, while a lofty purpose may be too abstract to have any effect whatsoever, its meaning interpreted and therefore executed vastly differently from one employee to the next, a narrow purpose may exclude high-level talent acquisition on the basis of views not shared.

Either way, a purpose is clearly not enough by itself to guarantee success neither in marketing nor management – regardless of how ambitious or refined it might be. The means with which the purpose/vision is achieved take far more work.

At Rouser, we will continue to err on the side of caution while stressing the importance of ensuring one does not make the best the enemy of the good. There is nothing wrong or meaningless with "merely" being a company that pays its taxes and treats its stakeholders well.

Particularly given how few supposedly purpose-driven companies do.

RECOMMENDED READING

RECOMMENDED READING

BOOKS

Decoded	Barden, Phil	2013
How Not to Plan	Binet, Les & Carter, Sarah	2018
Models. Behaving. Badly.	Derman, Emanuel	2011
The Four	Galloway, Scott	2017
The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning	Mintzberg, Henry	2000
Playing to Win	Lafley, A.G.	2013
Competitive Strategy	Porter, Michael	1998
Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind	Ries, Al & Trout, Jack	2001
Left Brain, Right Stuff	Rosenzweig, Phil	2015
The Halo Effect	Rosenzweig, Phil	2007
Building Distinctive Brand Assets	Rumaniuk, Jenni	2018
Good Strategy Bad Strategy	Rumelt, Richard	2011
How Brands Grow, 1 & 2	Sharp, Byron	2016
Theory. Evidence. Practice.	Sharp, Byron	2018
The Choice Factory	Shotton, Richard	2018
Eat Your Greens	Snijders, Wiemer et. al.	2018
Antifragile	Taleb, Nassim	2012
Fooled by Randomness	Taleb, Nassim	2004
Skin in the Game	Taleb, Nassim	2018
Trout on Strategy	Trout, Jack	2004

RECOMMENDED READING

STUDIES

Driving Cross-Platform Impact	ARF	2017
The Long-Term Effect of Marketing Strategy on Brand Sales	Ataman, Berk et. al.	2010
Effectiveness in Context	Binet, Les & Field, Peter	2018
Media in Focus	Binet, Les & Field, Peter	2017
The Long and the Short of It	Binet, Les & Field, Peter	2013
Forecasting Advertising and Media Effects on Sales	Dawes, John et. al.	2018
Re-evaluating Media	Ebiquity	2018
Measurement Strategy in the Digital Era	EffWorks	2017
Are Big Brands Dying?	Ehrenberg-Bass	2017
Planning for Synergy	Ehrenberg-Bass	2012
Mounting Risks to Marketing Effectiveness	Enders	2017
Behavioral Strategy: A Foundational View	Madansky, A. & Schrager, J.	2013
New Models for Marketing Effectiveness	IPA	2011
Profit Ability: The Business Case for Advertising	ThinkBox	2017

RECOMMENDED READING

ARTICLES

Unlocking the Power of Brand Properties	Barden, Phil	2014
Strategy Means Nothing Without Leadership	Barta, Thomas	2017
Planning for Synergy and Effectiveness	Carr, David	2017
The Necessity of Strategic Effectiveness Frameworks	Hanson, JP	2018
Thoughts on Strategy	Hanson, JP	2018
Marketing is Scrambled	Kennedy, R. & Hartnett, N.	2018
Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds	Kolbert, Elizabeth	2017
The Death of Don Draper	Leslie, Ian	2018
Marketers are Clueless About Marketing Effectiveness	Ritson, Mark	2018
Tactics Without Strategy is Dumbing Down Our Discipline	Ritson, Mark	2016
Fwd to CEO: The Most Valuable Business Tool Ever Invented	Roach, Tom	2018
Most Marketing is Bad Because It Ignores the Most Basic Data	Roach, Tom	2017
The Cascade Effect of Strategy	Sage, Shannon	2018
Some Inconvenient Truths About Brand Image Perceptions	Sharp, Byron	2018
Six Steps to Communicating Strategic Priorities Effectively	Sull, Donald et. al.	2018
Turning Strategy Into Results	Sull, Donald et. al.	2017

ABOUT ROUSER

WE ARE ROUSER. THE UN-AGENCY.

Rouser is an international client side strategic advisor headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, that alongside its global partners provides marketing leadership support, strategic direction, effectiveness frameworks and organizational accountability.

At the very core of the company is an unwavering belief in critical thinking and freedom from hype. This business first, nonsense free approach for which Rouser has become known has led not only to a perpetual analysis of both established truths and new ideas, but also a clearly defined, singular goal – to increase client profit.

As a result, globally active, award-winning companies with rapid growth rates and iconic, mature businesses alike turn to Rouser to make their brands better, not just bigger.

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