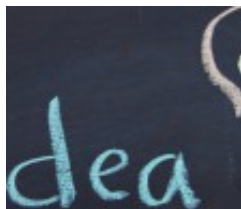


Five Quick Tips for Thinking Like a Marketing Revolutionary

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We are living in a revolutionary age. Moreover, our **digital** revolution promises to be the equivalent of the industrial revolution that transformed industry long ago. In today's workforce, many people are this generation's blacksmiths and just don't realize it yet.

Today, iteration, transition, and even evolution are methodologies no longer fast enough to keep pace with the shifts in the marketplace. We are living in an age of logarithmic change, as **Ray Kurzweil** states, where even the rate of acceleration is itself accelerating.

Adoption curves are contracting as laggards now are adopting with the pace of the early majority. Industries that have dominated categories are now more vulnerable to market shifts. Moreover, product lifecycles are shrinking as even high-cost products like consumer electronics are being considered high churn and disposable.

20th-century strategies, such as leaving innovation to smaller startups and then acquiring them, are proving more and more risky. This **digital** revolution makes scaling and access to markets simpler, easier, and exponentially cheaper.

Despite **marketing's** position on the frontline of this revolution, as an industry and as a profession, we've been slow to move. In fact, when we speak to marketers around the world or lecture to postgraduate students, we are constantly surprised at the level of the conversation and even the texts proffered as tools for the future.

Marketing's role, in connecting companies to customers, has never been more critical nor more exciting. However, we need to adopt the mindset of the revolutionary if we are to not simply manage change but to drive it.

So how do we begin to think like business revolutionaries?

1. Learn to hold an impossible thought

In the consulting we do with our clients, we like to start with an impossible thought.

We believe ImpossAble Thinking™ is a defining characteristic of entrepreneurs and corporate revolutionaries. This is the ability to sit with the impossible for long enough that new possibility emerges. This is how **Airbnb** could create a hotel chain with no hotels, how a chef can build a restaurant with no food or even a menu (its marketplace location allows customers to buy their own food and have bespoke meals prepared by the master chef,) and how startups in virtually every sector can drive share by actively rebelling against category norms.

2. Be the threat to your own business

We believe the traditional SWOT analysis needs a rethink.

In a highly changeable environment, our strengths are increasingly becoming our vulnerabilities. Our weaknesses offer new opportunities for differentiation, and our opportunities are typically so obvious our competitors are working on them, too. And critically, we now need to be the greatest threat to our business. If not, we're setting ourselves up to be one of the revolution's casualties.

3. Develop an entrepreneurial culture

We are often asked by corporations to come in and help develop an entrepreneurial culture within their team, hubs of innovation, and new thinking. That requires a completely different mindset to that of an employee.

What that means in practical terms is developing a capacity to not simply identify the next sale or campaign but to recognize and develop new streams of income and ultimately, to "cut our own grass."

4. Pick a noble fight

Every revolutionary challenges the status quo in one way or another and often this is what is most exciting to the people who buy in. It also helps build a sense of scale as the size of your enemy (be it a practice, a process, or even a belief) ultimately enables the change you wish to implement.

5. Nurture evangelical followers

Some 91% of consumers now rely on friend recommendations before making a purchase or any major life decision, according to **Nielsen**. Portals like **Trip Advisor** that produce no content but rather connect travelers to each other now exert more influence over the travel industry than any individual airline, hotel chain, or travel agency. That makes the portability of our messages and the "pass-on-ability" of your **marketing** today's killer app.

Rather than simply speaking at people, driving high reach and frequency until they acquiesce in desperation, we would do better to consider how recommending our business, product, or service reflects on customers themselves and defines their identity, not just our own.

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Change ultimately holds more opportunity than threat, and today, we either drive it or it drives us.

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