



# CK's Epiphanies

inspirations & revelations from  
the mind of a marketer.



myths:

## Marketing Myths that Miff Marketers

– Dispelling 10 of the Most Notorious Notions –

Marketing is, in large part, a misunderstood discipline. Marketing myths abound, leading to confusion among clients and disillusion among practitioners. This misunderstanding inevitably leads to missed expectations...and miffed marketers.

In this issue I'm dispelling 10 of marketing's most notorious notions. Be it in boardrooms, around water coolers or through industry circles these myths have been circulating so long they've been donned as dogma—and this miffed marketer is aiming to set the record straight. So without further ado, let's separate the facts from their fictitious foes:

### #10 **Fiction: Marketing is a task. (Phooey!)** **Fact: Marketing is a process.**

Marketing is not a series of independent tasks; it's a process of interdependent steps. The marketing process consists of identifying opportunities, developing strategies, planning programs and managing the marketing activities.

Implementing each step—carefully and constructively—assures the success of the entire process.

### #9 **Fiction: Marketing is sales. (Nonsense!)** **Fact: Sales is marketing.**

Sales is a subset of marketing. Just like Public Relations, Promotion, Branding and Advertising. That doesn't mean it's not important, it's just not isolated.

In many cases direct selling is your strongest marketing program. But the fact remains, it is a marketing program.

### #8 **Fiction: Once the plan is written, it's set in stone. (Hogwash!)** **Fact: Markets change, so must your plan.**

Plans and programs are always works-in-progress. Always. Therefore, they need to be revised and optimized. Always. Updating plans saves marketers money and ensures that opportunities arising after the plan is drafted aren't missed.

Further, it's this level of flexibility that keeps companies functioning at optimal levels.

### #7 **Fiction: Marketing is the marketing department's bag. (Bollocks!)** **Fact: Marketing is every department's deal.**

Whether or not your job is that of marketer, marketing is an area extending across all departments. Before a marketer can get buy-in from customers, they need it from co-workers. Every customer "touch-point" (e.g. sales, service, support) must be on-board and up-to-speed with the marketing efforts.

So while the marketing department holds the titles, every department carries the marketing responsibilities.

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## **#6 Fiction: Marketing is expendable. (Blasphemy!) Fact: Marketing, in times good and bad, is not expendable. It's critical.**

Sure, you need marketing during booms in order to cut through the clutter and maintain competitive ranking. But when the market takes a downhill slide, it's not a signal that your marketing programs should follow suit. The objective is to thrive during high times and survive during low times. And surviving means running a profitable and viable organization.

Granted, all the layoffs and budget cutbacks are hell on marketers' pocketbooks during low times. But equally challenging is the budget, sweat and tears companies expend during lucrative economies playing catch-up for all the time they sat idly by on the recession bench.

Not to mention the missed opportunities of eating your competitors market share while they cut back—and doing so at 50% less than you would have spent during healthier economies.

## **#5 Fiction: Only products or services can be marketed. (Horsefeathers!) Fact: Anything, anyone and anywhere can be marketed.**

You can market a product, service, place, person or concept. The question isn't what can be marketed; it's what can't be marketed. And that's next to nothing.

To take advantage of a really "out there" example, at the time of publishing there are several companies that are selling lunar real estate (yep, you can now give her the moon, or a piece thereof). In this lunar land grab, I'm not sure if the land can be developed (crater estates?), not certain of what true resources exist to be tapped from the moon (cheese?) and not convinced that humans will ever endure what all will be involved to actually live there full-time (time shares?).

But the principle is universal: anything, anyone, and anywhere can be marketed; all that's needed is a market to support you.

## **#4 Fiction: Marketing is only necessary when launching new products. (Rubbish!) Fact: Products, like people, have a lifecycle—not just a launch period.**

The product lifecycle mirrors those of people; there's introduction, growth, maturity and decline. Each stage requires its own marketing activities and maintenance programs (e.g. branding, repositioning, product diversification).

Taking good care of yourself facilitates a long, healthy life—the same goes for your products.

## **#3 Fiction: Marketing is an expense. (Balderdash!) Fact: Marketing is an investment.**

An expense is an item you pay for, use, and then its value is negated: a flight; a utility bill; a roll of paper towels. On the other hand, an investment is something for which you allocate a budget and receive returns: a customer acquisition campaign; a new product launch; an advertising program targeting a new market niche.

Marketing initiatives produce new customers, new revenue streams, and new market segments; hence they are investments. This is not an issue of semantics; it's one of numbers and sense.

## **#2 Fiction: Marketers are manipulative. (Malarkey!) Fact: Marketers are responsive.**

Now I'm not saying that it's not abused (buyers beware of shifty spammers and pesky politicians), but marketing is predicated on fulfilling the needs of the market, not the motives of the marketer.

All told, its purpose is to identify gaps, detect demand, and respond with relevant, desired solutions (hence the responsive premise).

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## **#1 Fiction: Marketing occurs in the marketing department. (Baloney!) Fact: Marketing occurs in the market.**

Your market, not your manager, is the judge of your success. Countless hours are spent profiling and cross-analyzing customers with little to no time spent actually interfacing with prospects. This leads to assumptions of your target market, which are in many cases erroneous.

Don't assume. Do ask. Call them, write them, conduct a focus group—just get their attention and advice. You'll be amazed at the insight they'll freely impart to you.

There you have it! Perhaps I've inspired you to adopt new viewpoints or abandon old ones. But where there are 10, there are certainly more. If you'd like to share other notorious notions that have you miffed, drop me an e-mail and I'll include them in an upcoming issue.

Next edition we'll explore more epiphanies; hope you'll join us. ■

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### Who is CK?

CK is Christina Kerley.

Since '91, Christina has been identifying and developing marketing epiphanies for up and coming Start-Ups and formidable Fortune 500s. Passionate about working on extraordinary projects and providing exemplary service, she formed ckEpiphany in '99.

Strengthening marketing efforts one epiphany at a time, the business develops client strategies, plans and programs. For more information on CK and ckEpiphany, please visit: [www.ckEpiphany.com](http://www.ckEpiphany.com)

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