

Planning A Campaign

The line between sales and marketing is a fuzzy one. Sales is marketing activity that takes place between individuals. Marketing is sales activity aimed at a group of people. The way we associate people into groups is itself a vital marketing activity.

Marketing campaigns are targeted at specific groups of people. In this chapter, Sun Tzu discusses the roles of focus, strength, relative size, and dominance in making a marketing campaign successful. He wants us to pick target markets that we can dominate. He also discusses the intersecting roles of the marketing managers and the sales management in a campaign.

Sun Tzu wanted to put the traditional view of competition into a larger context. The traditional view is all about size. A bigger company is more powerful than a smaller one because it has more marketing resources. Sun Tzu saw this view as too narrow. Indeed, he didn't think that real strength comes from size at all. An organization of any size can win, but, in his words, force must have the right strategy of attack. Given the right strategy, a small company can out market a larger one.

The chapter ends with a discussion of internal politics and its harmful affects on competition. Politics is likely to arise when we plan a marketing campaign. We must know how to avoid having it cripple our efforts.

Question One:

What role does marketing place in a business?

- A. Marketing determines the size of the business.**
- B. Marketing determines the growth of the business.**
- C. Marketing determines the popularity of the business.**
- D. Marketing determines the existence of the business.**

Your business depends on your marketing skills.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- D. Marketing determines the existence of the business.

No business can exist without marketing. If potential customer don't know about our products and services, we will never sell them. Since we can't sell everyone, marketing is informing groups of people about our products. For a consumer products company, it can take the form of a multimillion-dollar television campaign. For a small manufacturer, marketing might come from their sales alone force. For a retailer, marketing might consist simply of a sign on a storefront. For a gardener, it might be word of mouth. Every business needs some way to get the word about their business out.

We live in a competitive world. Existing businesses are trying to grow. New businesses are continually starting. Because of this competition, even businesses with a stable customer base must market actively. Without an active market presence, competitive pressures will push any business out of business.

Marketing is targeted at groups of people. Every marketing campaign targets a specific group. Many other companies have also targeted the same groups that we have targeted. It is a competitive world. If we are fail to do a good job marketing, we will cease to exist as a business. Marketing is our connection with the larger world of customers. We rely upon that connection for our survival.

Question Two:

What distinguishes strong marketing from weak marketing?

- A. Strong campaigns are smart; weak ones are dumb.**
- B. Strong campaigns are tested; weak ones are new.**
- C. Strong campaigns are focused; weak ones are unfocused.**
- D. Strong campaigns are large; weak ones are small.**

A focused campaign works.
An unfocused campaign doesn't.
A single product line is easy to sell.
Many different product lines are hard to sell.
A concentrated effort is successful.
A divided effort fails.
A small market is simple.
A spread-out market is difficult.
A single message works.
Multiple messages don't.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- C. Strong campaigns are focused; weak ones are unfocused.

Sun Tzu redefines strength as focus. At any level of marketing, a sharp, clear focus separates a strong campaign from a weak one. A focused campaign will consistently beat more clever, better tested, and larger campaigns that lacks focus

Of course, we say “focus,” but in the original text, Sun Tzu actually just used the Chinese ideogram for the number “one.” He contrasting it with the character that means “divided” or “broken.” He meant that strength was “focus,” but he also meant unity, single-mindedness, and consistency. He meant that unity of purpose, ideas, and actions is what makes any campaign strong.

This importance of focus ties directly to the need for a market philosophy or marketing mission. In marketing, our mission must keep us focused. We must know exactly who we are and to whom we are selling.

Question Three:

What should your marketing goals be?

- A. To use your focus to win critical marketing battles.**
- B. To use your focus to win most marketing battles.**
- C. To use your focus to win every marketing battle.**
- D. To use your focus to avoid marketing battles.**

Focus works because it enables you to win every segment you target.

This still doesn't make you a great marketing manager.

You want to win markets without competition.

This is your highest goal.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- D. To use your focus to avoid marketing battles.

Again, Sun Tzu wants to undermine our preconceptions about competition. Truly successful competition is not about conflict. In Sun Tzu's method, conflict is the *failure* of successful competitive strategy. Conflict is dangerous, destructive, and expensive. We don't want to start a tug of war for the customer's mind. We spend more money. Our competition spends more money. The customer is torn in the middle between us. This is not good marketing. It is conflict. We should always avoid conflict if we possibly can.

When we plan a marketing campaign, we position our product or company. Initially, we want that position ignored by the competition. Eventually, the strength of that position should discourage others from competing with us. Ideally, we want competitors to surrender our segment to us. They can concede to us for a number of reasons, but they all boil down to just one. We must make the costs of conflict seem greater than the benefits.

This is why deception and controlling perceptions is so important. We must minimize potential competition's perception of the value of our market. We must also maximize their perceptions of its barriers to entry.

Question Four:

What is the best strategy for picking a target market?

- A. Invent new groupings of people no one has seen before.**
- B. Win away the competition's distribution channels.**
- C. Outmode the competition's products.**
- D. Go after the most proven, established markets.**

It's best to find markets overlooked by the competition.

The next best is to win away the competition's distributors.

The next best is outmoding the competition's products.

The worst is to attack an entrenched position.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- A. Invent new groupings of people no one has seen before.

If a group of people exists, why has no one noticed it? People are complex. All groups are generalizations. The general population can be sliced and associated an infinite number of ways. Once a group of people was just that. You could see the group on the sidewalk. Today, groupings are intellectual constructions. How do you group people sitting at homes alone in front of their televisions or computers? You imagine the characteristics, desires, or behaviors that they might share.

This invention of a group allows us to use a fundamental technique in Sun Tzu's method. We want to claim our territory before someone else occupies it. We want to get to the battlefield first. We want to discourage competition from coming after us. Every other form of marketing campaign is less desirable than this preemptive strike of identifying a group first.

If we cannot indentify a new group, the next best attack is indirect, one that breaks apart alliances. Remember that strength comes from focus or unity. We must look for ways to be more valuable to the distribution channels than our competitors. This too allows us to win a market without a marketing battle.

Question Five:

If you have no alternative except to go after a competitor's entrenched market, how do you do it?

- A. You must take time to prepare your campaign.**
- B. You must be persistent in your campaign.**
- C. You must use all your resources to win the market.**
- D. You must never try to win another's entrenched position.**

What happens when you attack an entrenched position?

You can campaign, but you cannot win sales.

First, you must prepare the resources needed.

You need to buy advertising and build distribution channels.

This takes months.

You run in circles chasing after the competition.

After more months of work, you still can't get a share.

Management and sales people are impatient for results.

You then try to defame the competition.

You destroy your credibility.

You are still unable to change their position.

This type of attack is a disaster.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- D. You must never try to win another's entrenched position.

Market position is about identity. Coke is Coke. No one else can be Coke. Pepsi can define Pepsi, but they cannot define themselves as Coke. They must be something different.

Marketing is a battle for the customer's mind. Minds are not changed. People know what they know. People can be educated and learn more, but those new ideas cannot conflict directly with what they already know. In science, they say that old theories never die. Old scientists do. Products die before their positions.

In establishing a position, we establish an identity. A marketing campaign defines identity in the marketplace. A campaign is the education of a group of people to the new meanings we invent.

Question Six:

How then can you put competitors out of business if you don't attack them directly?

- A. You must not go after competitors; you must simply avoid them by changing your position.**
- B. You must first collaborate with your competitors and then turn against them.**
- C. You must take a series of small segments that eventually win away the whole market.**
- D. You must keep hidden from your competition and secretly build your position.**

Make good use of marketing.

Let the competition surrender segments to you.

You can do it without a single battle.

You can win customers away from their current suppliers.

You do it by targeting niches.

You can destroy the competition's distribution.

You must move quickly into the market.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- C. You must take a series of small segments that eventually win away the whole market.

Do not mistakenly think that Sun Tzu preaches non-competition. He wants us to confront and beat the competition. However, we must pick the time and place for that competition. Temporarily, we may secretly build up our position. We may also avoid competition temporarily by changing our position. We eventually must confront the competition. The secret is doing this only in situations where we are certain to win that confrontation.

We cannot change the mind of the marketplace. We can gradually shift it to the point where old positions have no meaning. This takes time and patience. It may take a ten-year plan to defeat a large competitor.

Question Seven:

What attitude should you have about winning segments?

- A. You should be satisfied with generating income.**
- B. You must be totally dedicated to owning the market.**
- C. Avoiding conflict is more important than winning.**
- D. You must bide your time, protect your resources, and conserve your energy.**

In marketing, you must leverage every resource.
Never stop promoting when you target a segment.
You can gain the advantage if you focus.
To do this, you must plan your marketing strategy.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- B. You must be totally dedicated to owning the market.**

Sun Tzu's method may require patience, but it still hates lukewarm commitments. We want to avoid direct conflict, but we must be completely dedicated to winning our target segments. We must fight for them continually. We must always be looking for ways in which we can beat the competition.

Sun Tzu advises patience in the sense that we must await our opportunities, but he also wants us to embrace competition. We must love winning. We don't risk our resources in battle. One way we discourage battle is using everything we have to win a market. Winning markets makes us richer and stronger. It doesn't make us poorer. Fighting for markets makes us poorer. We must pick our markets and make sure that we win them. We will only win if we are totally dedicated.

We cannot underestimate the demands of any market. Even when we pick a segment everyone else has overlooked, we cannot be lazy about winning it. There is no easy road to marketing success, or, if there is, it should always take us by surprise. We must assume every market will take everything that we have.

Question Eight:

What information is the basis of your marketing strategy?

- A. Knowledge of the relative strength of your distribution.**
- B. Knowledge of your competitor's goals and plans.**
- C. Knowledge of the psychology of your competition.**
- D. Knowledge of the psychology of your segment.**

The rules for winning markets are:

If your distribution is ten times better, dominate a market.

If your distribution is five times better, attack a market.

If your distribution is twice as good, divide the market.

If your distribution is equal, sell only to the best prospects.

If your distribution is weaker, avoid the competition.

If your distribution is much weaker, find market niches.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- A. Knowledge of the relative strength of your distribution.

In Sun Tzu's original text, strategy is determined by the relative size of competing forces. In marketing, force is determined by the strength of our distribution channels. The only purpose of marketing is selling products. Market awareness is worthless if customers cannot get the product. For our target segment, we need a sales force, distribution, and sales points that get the products into customers' hands.

The strength of our distribution determines the strategy we can use in marketing. We need to market aggressively to support a large sales force, many distributors, and many sales points. On the other hand, if we have a small sales force, few distributors, and few sales points, we must market more conservatively.

Relative size is situational. Even a small organization can put ten times the resources into a given market segment than a much larger one. Our strategy must be to arrange situations so that we are the ones with the dominant force. Unless we have five times the presence of the competition, we aren't in a position to attack the segment. We still have to divide the market up further.

Question Nine:

Doesn't this mean that larger companies always have an advantage in marketing?

- A. Yes, this is why large companies dominate the economy.**
- B. Large companies cannot adjust to fast-changing markets.**
- C. Small companies can address smaller groups of people.**
- D. Both large and small companies have their own strengths and weaknesses.**

Small companies cannot sell broad markets.
However, large companies cannot satisfy niche markets.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

D. Both large and small companies have their own strengths and weaknesses.

Size cuts both ways. Large organizations have more resources, but they also can't move or change as quickly and easily. They also can't address the specialized needs of small groups. Is this any less true today in today's economy than it was 2,500 years ago?

The fact of nature is the basis of all competition. The power of the large counters the swiftness of the small. Dinosaurs used size, but they were unable to adapt. Over time, speed wins.

Philosophically, Sun Tzu clearly prefers the agility of speed against power of size. Large organizations are costly to support and take too long to move in a new direction. Large organizations cannot efficiently pioneer new niches. Initially, those segments are too small to support them. Large organizations also have a more difficult time with focus. This is why large companies always do better once they are broken into smaller units.

Using agility, we can create situations where we have the necessary superiority of forces at a given place and time. Of course, smaller organizations are fragile, one misstep and they are gone.

Question Ten:

What should your relationship with your target market and your organization?

- A. Your organization is separate from your target market.**
- B. Your organization must shape itself to the target segment.**
- C. You must control your market and your organization must support you.**
- D. You must support your target market and you must control your organization.**

You must own your own segments.
Your organization must support you.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- C. You must control your market and your organization must support you.

We target a particular segment because we know that we can dominate it. In marketing, we are looking for a “territory” that we can control. Our target segment must know us as the preferred supplier. Our competitors must see themselves as inferior substitutes for our products.

To achieve this domination, our organization must support us. We can only control a market with the dedication of the rest of our organization. It will be impossible for us to dominate our target market without our organization’s support. The organization doesn’t necessarily have to reshape itself to our target, but it is dependent on that market. A market will not support an organization unless that organization is dedicated to that market.

This chapter started with a discussion of focus or, as in the original, “unity.” As we discover a target market, the organization must unite to dominate that market. If we are planning a marketing campaign, it must support our decision to focus on a segment.

Question Eleven:

How does a close relationship with the target market affect the organization?

- A. Focussing on your segment makes the organization strong.**
- B. A close relationship limits the organization to one segment.**
- C. The organization and market have different priorities.**
- D. Segment demands can hurt the organization's focus.**

Focussing on its segments makes a company strong.
Ignoring its segments makes a company weak.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- A. Focussing on your segment makes the organization strong.

Organizations resist close association with a target segment. They are afraid that they will be trapped or pigeonholed in that segment. They want to position themselves for a broader market than they truly serve. This impulse is destructive.

Remember what makes an organization strong. Strength comes from focus, unity. An organization that is truly devoted to its market is limiting itself, yes, at least for a period of time. This limitation is not a bad thing. By identifying with their market, the organization can own the segment and grow successful from it.

Focussing on a segment of a market is difficult. Other opportunities come along to distract us. A single segment focus always seems too constricting. We always seem to have more potential customers outside of our target segment than within it.

Given these limitations, why does focussing on one segment make the organization stronger? Dominating a segment is more profitable than spreading out among separate markets. By selling similar customers repeatedly, we lower our costs of sales and delivery. We learn how to make money. New markets are expensive. Small market shares are expensive. Domination is profitable.

Question Twelve:

Why shouldn't sales decide which prospects they sell even if those prospects are outside of the target segment?

- A. Sales people are too optimistic in picking prospects.**
- B. Sales people are too pessimistic in picking prospects.**
- C. Sales people are too confused in picking prospects.**
- D. They are at once too optimistic, too pessimistic, and too confused in picking prospects.**

Sales management creates problems in its market in three different ways.

Ignorant of which segments are winnable, they attack any market.

Ignorant of which segments cannot be won, they forget existing markets.

This is called wasting your marketing.

Sales management doesn't understand marketing.

They think that they can go after any market.

This muddles your marketing campaign.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

D. They are at once too optimistic, too pessimistic, and too confused in picking prospects.

Selling is an emotionally difficult job. The truth about sales is that all prospects look good at the beginning of a sales cycle. As a sales cycle progresses, sales people grow more pessimistic about a given prospect. Sales people are never certain about the "market segment" to which their prospects belong. They don't see groups. They see individuals. This view is absolutely appropriate for sales.

Sales people also fail to see the organizational costs of selling. They don't see the long-term advantages of dominating a given segment. Sales are immediate. The focus of sales people is, by necessity, shorter-term. Marketing must provide sales people with good prospects. With enough prospects from the target segment, sales people are not tempted outside those markets.

Question Twelve:

How does sales management help or hurt you in maintaining focus on a market?

- A. Sales managers are good at controlling their people.**
- B. Sales managers consider sales goals more important than market focus.**
- C. Sales managers give their sales people too much freedom.**
- D. Sales managers don't concern themselves with marketing.**

Sales management doesn't understand market priorities.

They give their sales people too much freedom.

This creates uncertainty in your target market.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- C. Sales managers give their sales people too much freedom.

Sales managers have varying degrees of understanding in the importance of market focus. Some are supportive. Others are outright hostile. In every case, they have less control over their sales people than we might suppose. Sales managers spend little time directing people's actions. Sales people have a great deal of personal freedom. They spend their time with prospects and customers, not under the watchful eye of managers.

Sales people make their money by making sales. They will sell whoever they can to generate income. If our target market sees that our sales people are selling everyone and anyone, they doubt our organization's focus. We can tell them that we are concentrating on their needs, but unless our sales people behave consistently with that claim, our market segment won't believe us.

Sales forces must be controlled. Our target market must see our dedication in them. Sales people are not controlled by sales management. They are controlled by the sales material and sales leads that they are given by marketing. They are especially controlled by the design of their commission system.

Question thirteen:

What are the dangers of letting the sales force sell outside of your target market?

- A. As long as they generate sales, the danger is small.**
- B. You will have to adjust your market focus.**
- C. You will have to broaden your marketing to support them.**
- D. They will destroy your chances of success.**

If you confuse your target market, you create distrust. This invites the competition to win away your customers. An unfocused campaign destroys your chances of success.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- D. They will destroy your chances of success.

When planning our campaign, we must look at where sales are being made. We choose our target segment because we are already selling to it. Nevertheless, we cannot shift or broaden our marketing whenever sales people discover prospects outside of our target segment. We will always have sales at the edges of our market, but we cannot pick a new target until we completely dominate our existing target. Dominance is impossible without sales support.

When planning a campaign, we must plan to stay with our target segment through the course of that campaign. The future will offer new campaigns and new marketing targets. When planning a campaign, the main problem is always focus. Our marketing materials must be focused. Our advertising and promotion must be focused. Our sales efforts must be focused. All of this demonstrates our dedication to winning our market both to that market and our competition.

At the beginning of the marketing campaign, the rest of the organization, especially sales, must commit itself to maintaining our campaign's focus on its target market. Everyone must devote all their efforts to dominating the target market.

Question Fifteen:

With which of the five key elements discussed in chapter one is this chapter primarily concerned?

- A. Your market leadership.**
- B. The nature of your segment.**
- C. Your visibility.**
- D. Your marketing philosophy.**

You must know five things to win markets.

Success comes from knowing when to invest in a segment and when to save your money.

You must know how to tackle large markets and small.

Success comes from focussing your company on its market.

Success comes from turning problems into opportunities.

Success comes from market leadership and winning the trust of sales people.

You must know these five things.

You then know the philosophy of winning markets.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- D. Your marketing philosophy.

Remember that Sun Tzu's definition of marketing philosophy. We must share our market's goals and success. We don't plan our campaign only for our own interests. We plan it to help us better serve a marketplace.

We started this chapter talking about the advantages of focus. Focus comes from our philosophy. Picking our target segment must be consistent with our philosophy. We must choose the size of market that we can dominate. We will be successful if we are able to maintain our focus on the segment we serve. This will not be easy. Focus creates problems, especially between sales and marketing. The chapter ends with discussing the problems of maintaining focus in an organization. Managing the organization enables us to make our marketing philosophy concrete.

Question Eighteen:

What is the basis for Sun Tzu's theory about how to plan a marketing campaign?

- A. It is based on focus.**
- B. It is based on controlling the organization.**
- C. It is based on market domination.**
- D. It is based on knowledge.**

Experience says:

Know your customers and your market.

If you do, you can win any market.

You can know your customers, but not know your segment.

Then, for every sale you make, you will lose another.

You may know neither your customers nor your segment.

Then, you will lose every sale.

From The Art of Marketing

Answer:

- D. It is based on knowledge.

Although we have been talking about focus, dominating markets, controlling the organization, and marketing philosophy, Sun Tzu reminds us that this is all really about knowledge. We have to know our focus, our shared goal. We have to know what market segments we can dominate. We have to know the capabilities of our distribution channel. We have to know how to get cooperation from our sales force.

Our job in marketing is to bring two types of knowledge together. We must know our organization. We must know the value that our organization can deliver relative to the competition. We must also know our customers: who they are; where they are; and what their needs are. We must especially know how to group them so that we can contact them with a unified campaign. Our job is to bring together these two forms of knowledge. Our knowledge of our organization and our knowledge of customers must allow us to pick the right market segments and plan a campaign to win them.