

TEST YOUR MARKETING MOXIE

by Martin Thoma

It's a new year—how's your marketing moxie measure up? Take this painless test to evaluate your readiness to conquer the world of marketing this year.

For each YES answer, score 2 points, each NO, score zero. You get 1 point for a SORT OF.

CATEGORY 1: COMPETITIVE INTEL

- 1: Do you know what your industry's (read: competitors') average marketing spend as a percentage of sales is?
Yes Sort Of No.
- 2: Do you know how your marketing muscle stacks up against those competitors where you frequently go head-to-head? Yes Sort Of No.
- 3: Do you have a tight, supported (not guesswork or "gut"!) analysis of your competitors' strengths and weaknesses and how they stack up against yours? Yes Sort Of No.

CATEGORY 2: FINANCIAL CAPITAL

- 4: Do you have a marketing budget that you can confidently allocate for the entire year (without fear of "roll backs" in June if the company is not meeting other targets)? Yes Sort Of No.
- 5: Is this marketing budget competitive with the average marketing investments of your industry competitors?
Yes Sort Of No.
- 6: Does your company's management team view marketing expenditures as necessary investments in the future of the business (vs. necessary evils or luxuries for "fat times") Yes Sort Of No.
- 7: Is your marketing budget deployed against concrete and measurable marketing objectives for the year (vs. a marketing "slush fund" for managers to tap at will)? Yes Sort Of No.

CATEGORY 3: HUMAN CAPITAL

- 8: Does your company have a professional marketing manager on staff with concretely defined marketing goals for the year? Yes Sort Of No.
- 9: Do you have strategic partners who intimately understand your brand, your objectives, your marketing accountabilities? (E.g. printers, designers or agencies.) Yes Sort Of No.
- 10: Is your employee force clear (from management to line workers) regarding the brand positioning your company has staked out in the market? Yes Sort Of No.
- 11: Is your management team unified on the above measure (vs. CEO says one thing while COO acts another)?
Yes Sort Of No.
- 12: Is your sales force engaged and aligned with your marketing management (vs. the two acting like loose cannons careening against each other on deck)? Yes Sort Of No.

CATEGORY 4: SMARTS CAPITAL

- 13: Do you have a clearly formulated brand strategy that convincingly differentiates yourself from all competition?
Yes Sort Of No.
- 14: Do you have an approved annual marketing plan with clearly calendared and budgeted strategies and tactics?
Yes Sort Of No.

- 15: Is this marketing plan tightly aligned with your management team's business strategy?
Yes Sort Of No.
- 16: Do you manage a periodic customer survey allowing you to "take the temperature" and track trends in your customers' experience and perception of your company? Yes Sort Of No.
- 17: Do you have fresh insights garnered from focus groups, telephone surveys, Internet surveys, mystery shopping trips or other commissioned research into your target market(s)? Yes Sort Of No.
- 18: Can you identify where leads come from, what a lead costs to generate, what a new customer costs to acquire, what types of leads generate what revenue for your firm? Yes Sort Of No.
- 19: Do you have a sales management system that provides "forward visibility" into your pipeline as well as "backward visibility" into sales figures? Yes Sort Of No.
- 20: Do you have a clearly defined target audience identified by demographic criteria such as geography, household/company income/revenue, buying behaviors, etc. Yes Sort Of No.
- 21: Do you have a fresh database of these target customers? Yes Sort Of No.

CATEGORY 5: CREATIVE CAPITAL

- 22: Do you have a legible logo that effectively telegraphs brand values? Yes Sort Of No.
- 23: Do you have an organized and defined VisualBrand™ system that defines appropriate use of colors, typography, logo, design values (sometimes referred to a corporate identity standards or graphic identity standards)? Yes Sort Of No.
- 24: Do you have a physical place of doing business that differentiates your firm and telegraphs brand values?
Yes Sort Of No.
- 25: Do you have a well-organized and thought-out sales support system (sales collateral, video/CD/DVD presentation, proposal templates, referral thank-yous, introductory letters and documents) that empowers your sales force to tell your story? Yes Sort Of No.
- 26: Do you have a website that reflects your brand values and VisualBrand™ design?
Yes Sort Of No.
- 27: Is your website content fresh and up-to-date (vs. months or years old)? Yes Sort Of No.
- 28: Do you have—or have the facility to create—compelling creative messages (whether ads, Internet, trade show exhibits or print collateral) that support your branding and marketing strategy? Yes Sort Of No.

Total your points _____

How's your Marketing Moxie Measure? Use this key:

- 0-10 points... Potential customers won't know you; don't want to.
- 11-20 points... You must be doing something right, but it sure ain't marketing.
- 21-30 points... Your marketing discipline ranks somewhere between mediocre and just plain average.
- 31-40 points... Showing some real muscle tone, but watch for competitors gaining on you!
- 41-55 points... Excellent work—you're poised to kick @\$\$ in marketing this year.
- 56 points... Perfect score—want to work for us as a consultant?