

# **DISPATCHES**<sup>TM</sup>

*Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front*

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Sunday, November 14, 2010

## **WORLD-CLASS MARKETING**

**world-class (adjective):  
ranking among the foremost in the world;  
of the highest order**

Our work takes us into many companies, throughout the world. One of the things we frequently hear is the assertion that we (the companies we work with) aspire to achieve “world class marketing.” But what does this mean? How will the organization know it has achieved world-class marketing? Who, or what, is a world-class marketer? These are important questions to address if anyone, or any organization, is to achieve world-class marketing.

It’s easy to identify a world-class athlete. It’s evident in the athlete’s performance. A world-class athlete, or performance, is heads-and-shoulders above the mass. S/he is clearly one of the best. The world-class athlete achieves what few can ever hope to approach, no less achieve. It’s the kind of performance from an individual, or team, that puts her on the podium to receive one of the few precious medals awarded in the Olympics, or share in being awarded the Stanley Cup, to earn a Super Bowl ring, to win the World Cup. It’s about being first-rate, superlative, top-notch, really and truly outstanding. That’s world-class!

Jerry Rice, Hall of Fame receiver formerly of the San Francisco 49ers football team, is a perfect example of a world-class performer. According to Wikipedia, he was selected to the Pro Bowl 13 times and named All-Pro 11 times. He won three Super Bowl rings, and an AFC Championship. Jerry Rice retired as the leader in a number of statistics. His 1,549 receptions were 447 receptions ahead of the second place record holder. He had 22,895 receiving yards, 7,961 yards ahead of the second place spot. Rice’s 197 touchdown receptions are 65 scores more than the second all time receiver, and his 208 total touchdowns are 33 more than the current second place finisher. Mr. Rice’s 1,256 points scored makes him the highest-scoring non-kicker in NFL history. He dominated the game at his position. He, and his performance, is undisputedly world-class!

Tide detergent is a world-class brand. Created in 1943, and introduced to test markets in October 1946 as the world’s first heavy-duty detergent, Tide detergent outsold every other brand within weeks. It became so popular that store managers were forced to limit the quantity purchased per customer. Today the brand enjoys over a 40% market share in North America. P&G, its parent company, has evolved the brand significantly over the years. Tide detergent was improved 22 times during its first 21 years on the market, and P&G still strives for perfection in performance. The brand is comprised of several product lines among which are Tide Stain Release (Pre-Treat

Spray, In-Wash Booster, etc.), Liquid Laundry Detergents (Tide Coldwater Liquid Detergent, Tide TOTALCARE HE Liquid Laundry Detergent, Tide Original with Acti-Lift technology, among others), Tide Powder Detergents (Tide with Bleach, Tide HE Powder, and others), Dye and Perfume Free-Tide, Tide To Go, Tide Washing Machine Cleaner, and Tide Laundry Care Accessories. They have a continuous stream of innovation aimed at better meeting consumers' clothes care cleaning needs. No wonder the brand's total sales are greater than the next nine brands combined. That, too, is world-class performance!

But to many of the companies who claim to aspire to becoming a world-class marketing organization this quest is going to be nothing more than a hollow slogan, rather than an achievable goal. For the most part it will mean nothing to the marketers within the company, or to the organization itself. It is very likely to be short-lived, and self-delusional, if is not defined by metrics, and demonstrated with achievement. While it may be intended to inspire the troops, that inspiration will rapidly evaporate if it continues to be business as usual within the marketing department, and organization.

So what can we expect world-class marketing, and marketers, to be about? Here are some thoughts, both qualitative and quantitative:

- Establish and market “brands” with lasting value that command customer devotion as contrasted to selling products;
- Doesn't try to be all things to all people but selects a strategically appropriate Target-Customer segment;
- Understands and appreciates the “chosen” Target-Customer so well that the marketer can predict how the customer will respond to marketing activities, and only presents those activities that will get the customer to behave in a predetermined manner;
- Serves the Target-Customer, and better serves that customer than competition;
- Is a champion of the customer and advocates on the customer's behalf, even over that of the organization;
- Develops products that meet relevant customer needs, with meaningful differentiation versus competition, rather than stuffing products with short-lived features and attributes;
- Has a rich pipeline of product improvements, and new products, to build the brand;
- Creates a Brand Positioning Strategy Statement, and uses it to direct each and every functional area in the company, to deliver it in a way that is meaningful to the Target-Customer;
- Pro-sitions (i.e., proactive positioning) the brand to accelerate its growth rate, and extend its lifecycle;

- Manages to achieve “quality” growth, consisting of increasing the number of devoted, evangelical customers;
- Grows faster than the category, and each of its competitors;
- Focuses on SMART Marketing, Marketing Mix, and Tactics’ Objectives (behaviors!) essential to deliver on Business Objectives (sales, market share and profits!);
- Understands the causal factors for any variances (positive or negative) in actual versus planned business performance, and knows what actions to take to exploit or remedy the situation;
- Knows the ROI (Return on Investment) for each marketing mix element (e.g., advertising, promotion, medical congresses, continuing medical education, merchandising, etc.), and tactic employed in the marketing plan;
- Improves margins, and reduces percentage of promotional sales while growing the brand;
- Drives and leads the development of BIG ideas to stimulate incremental growth;
- Adopts “best” practices, principles and processes to enhance the likelihood, and consistency, of success;
- Develops and manages a robust program of adaptive experiments (in-market tests), analyzes the results, and rolls-out activities that generate significant results, to produce predictable outcomes with a highly favorable ROI;
- Analyzes and assesses all activities (including those of competitors) for lessons learned and subsequent adaptation;
- Sets high standards for self, and the organization, and pursues their achievement with devotion and passion;
- Each brand-marketing manager is accountable to self as a leader, and to the organization.

### **BOATS & HELICOPTERS:**

- 1) ***Start with quality people*** – To have a winning team one needs to start with winners. What does this mean? Select marketers with proven track records of successes. It’s not about the marketer being on a team that has scored big, but playing a critical part in that brand’s success. For those coming out of school, it is not the school, but what they achieved with their young lives. They should be able to explain how they created success, perhaps, where others had failed. Importantly, these people need to have a winning attitude. They will do what it takes to create success. These are the type of marketers you need on your team. They are empathetic with the customer, they are champions of the brand, they think and act like the CEO of the brand. They may, at times, be difficult to

manage, but they will spur the brand, and organization, to achieve ever-higher levels of success.

- 2) ***Define “world-class” and evangelize it with everyone in the marketing department, and organization*** – There is an old saying, “if you don’t know where you are going, how will you know you’ve arrived?” It is important to give meaning to this term “world-class” so that everyone knows what to expect, and the specific behaviors and performance to inspect, and emulate. ***We’ve shared some of our thoughts of what constitutes “world-class” marketing; please take a moment to share your thoughts with us by replying to this article.***
- 3) ***Set high standards for yourself, and everyone that’s part of the brand team*** – This is about being “world-class” and, as such, could have been part of the previous point. However, it is extremely important for all of us to realize that “world-class” consists of living-up to standards that are of the highest order, as evidence by the career of Jerry Rice, and the performance of the Tide Detergent brand in extending and enriching its lifecycle. World-class, like another commonly used term “marketing excellence,” is about more, much more than bringing marketers, and the organization, up to some norms. It is about striving for, and achieving, the highest standards of performance.
- 4) ***Prepare the organization for world-class performance*** – This entails providing training for marketers to seed the skills for world-class performance. A winning attitude is absolutely essential to success but it is incomplete without the wherewithal (i.e., skills) to achieve it. This includes training for senior managers also. It is the senior managers who must reinforce formal training through their daily management of their marketers, and brands. Everyone has to go to school on this to ensure that quality processes, along with best principles and practices, are institutionalized to create world-class performance. ***For more information on training, click here (if you are viewing this DISPATCHES directly from our website) to go to the BDN Institute to learn about our world-class training programs.***
- 5) ***Inspect performance for that which you aspire to achieve*** – Feedback is absolutely essential to determine if one is making progress in performing at a world-class level. Goals need to be quantified in some way, and performance must be analyzed, and assessed, for their achievement. For example, we can ensure that our Target-Customer is defined in a technically sound way (using the seven elements, and Add-Valuator tool, we teach in our Brand Positioning & Communication College program), and conduct marketing research to ensure that we have selected a strategically appropriate segment. We can set quantifiable goals for the product pipeline and test concepts before undertaking product development to focus on those with the highest likelihood of success as measured by purchase interest among our Target-Customers. Importantly, we must also identify causal factors for actual performance, and determine what we need to do to improve.
- 6) ***Adapt*** – This is about learning, and taking action on the learning. We use the learning to provide direction, and take action to iterate our way to world-class performance. World-class performance is a journey. When we believe we have achieved it we must use it to

spur us to even greater performance. What is world-class today may be mediocrity tomorrow. So we continue to strive, measure, learn and adapt.

Let's work together to make "world-class" marketing a reality for self, our brands, and organizations.

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