10 ways to market your business or idea effectively, to people
Part 1

1. Set Goals and Objective ................................................................. 5
2. Analyze Your Situation ................................................................. 10
3. Map Your Messages ................................................................. 16
4. Live Out Your Mission ................................................................. 21
5. Outline Your Tactics ................................................................. 26
6. Make a Timeline ................................................................. 31
7. Mind Your Budget ................................................................. 35
8. Divide and Conquer ................................................................. 40
9. Measure Up ................................................................. 45
10. Stay Current .............................................................................. 50
Part 2

1. What is Guerilla marketing and how can I use it? .................. 56
2. Everyone is doing Social Media Wrong -
   Here is how to use it the smart way............................... 61
3. Attract your potential customers
   by creating informative content
   that helps them make a decision .................................... 66
4. Use magnets like contests and giveaways
   to pull customers into your business .............................. 71
5. Work with your partners to share information ...................... 75
6. What are scalable marketing channels
   and how can I use them............................................... 80
7. Make the media love you ................................................. 85
8. Help others because that is how you help yourself............ 90
Part 1
Just having a unique business idea is not enough these days. If you can’t market your idea well, you won’t get to taste the fruits of your idea. Marketing is a crucial cog in any business. And to market it right, you must have an effective marketing plan.

But before you create a marketing plan, you must have a purpose for it. Before you think about the tactics and means to execute your marketing plan, you must know what your
marketing plan is intended to achieve. And for that, you have to set goals and objectives.

The goals would be those statements that provide you your marketing direction. They are the long-term plans that are in line with the overall goals of your company. It can be tricky to set the goals sometimes. If the goals you set are too broad, they may not be that effective. On the other hand, if they are too narrow, your marketing efforts can get limited to only a particular direction while neglecting the others. Both these things are dangerous.
That’s why you need to be SMART while setting up your marketing goals.

The goals that you set should be:

**Specific**

The goals that you set should be perfectly defined. At the same time, they should be actionable too. For example, if you decide to set increasing the number of followers on a particular social media as a goal, then it will be too vague. You would have no idea whether your goal is achieved or not. On the other hand, if you keep it specific to say achieving 100 more followers on Facebook, then you can easily track your progress. Having specific goals helps increase the effectiveness of your marketing plan.

**Measurable**

The goals that you set should be measurable over time. Like in the previous example, if you set a vague goal, there would be no way for you to know if your goal is achieved or not. In that case, even having one more follower than before may be termed as a completion of your goal. While if you have a
specific figure put forth, you can easily measure how far you’ve come with achieving your target and how much more effort you have to put in.

**Achievable**

This is the most important thing among the five qualities of your marketing goals. It’s one thing to say that your company will become the most prominent one on social media in the next year, but deep down, you know that it’s not possible. Having higher goals and watching yourself fail to achieve them time and again is not the way forward. Your goals should be such that you can achieve them in the set time frame. Your goals should be within your reach.

**Relevant**

The goals that you decide for your marketing strategy should be relevant to the current marketing trends. If your target audience is primarily based on the internet, having goals that promote your product on the offline platforms won’t give you any results. Before setting your goals, you should always assess the mood of the market.

**Timely**
And finally, you should always have a fixed timeframe associated with your goals. They should be such that you can achieve them in a particular set of time.

Once the goals are set, you then need to break them down into specific objectives. Objectives are the specific and measurable actions that help you achieve your goals. If your goals are the ends, your objectives are the means to reach those ends.

For example, if you plan to double your online presence by the end of the year, your objectives should be to achieve a specific number of followers by the end of every month. Achieving these small little objectives helps you achieve the bigger goals.

And always remember, there is no set or universally accepted definition of what your goals and objectives should be like. Whatever works for you is what you need to do.
2 Analyze Your Situation

While planning the marketing strategy, the goals and objectives serve as a destination where you have to reach in the end. Once the end is known, the next step would ideally be to identify the means to reach that end, i.e., determine the marketing tactics. But in this competitive market, you can’t directly jump into a marketing tactic, or set of tactics. Before doing that, you need to stop and analyze your situation.

This competitive analysis will not only help you to identify
your competitors in the market, it will also help you to identify your own strengths and weaknesses.

Some of the questions that you need to answer at the end of this analysis are:

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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Who are your competitors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are their strengths and weaknesses?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are their marketing strategies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much do they spend on marketing?</td>
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<td>How do your products differ from theirs?</td>
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<td>What do they offer that you do not?</td>
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If you can find the answers to these questions, then you have performed market research and you will have the information necessary to decide on your own marketing tactics.
So then, how do analyze the market?

One of the ways to do it is to perform a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. It is simple and yet a powerful tool to help you determine your marketing strategy. The main reason behind it is the consideration of both internal and external factors that can have an effect on your marketing strategy.

**Strengths**

You need to look into your company and identify your own strengths. At this point of analysis, you need to list down all the positives that your company has and are in your control. It includes both the tangible and intangible things. For example, your product or service may offer the best quality or result in the market, or how you’re well-established to cater to the needs of a certain section of the market. It should be a list of what you do well and of all the points that you score over your competitors.

**Weakness**

This is once again an internal analysis where you need to list down factors that are within your control and yet hamper
your progress. Your weaknesses are what your competitors would exploit. You may have a bad business location. Your after-sales service might not be satisfactory. Your staff may not have the kind of expertise needed for the job. You should make an effort to find out every big and small weakness of yours so that you can try and overcome them.

**Opportunities**

This is where you need to look outside of your business and identify the opportunities around you. Your city might be getting a new technology data center and there is an opportunity for you connect with personnel that will be relocated to that area. Or a funding legislation is being introduced which you can use to train your staff in the expertise they lack. The kind of opportunities you find will be based more on the kind of opportunities you seek. So make sure you keep your eyes open to see even the tiniest opportunity around you.

**Threats**

And finally, you need to list down all the threats that your business has in your market sector. It might be a new competitor that’s stepped into the market. Or an existing one who has lowered the prices of their products and or services.
Perhaps your suppliers have suddenly increased the prices of raw materials, or the cost of labor rises. Or the needs of your customer base might be changing. These are the factors beyond your control that have the power to put your business at risk, ultimately leading to a drop in sales and revenue.

Once you have done the SWOT analysis, you can then use it to determine your marketing strategy.
Typically, there are four ways you can use the details of your SWOT analysis:

- Use your strengths to take advantage of the opportunities
- Overcome your weaknesses by taking advantage of the opportunities
- Use your strengths to avoid the threats
- Minimize your weaknesses by avoiding the threats

Analyzing your situation this way and you will find it easier to draw up tactics for your marketing strategy.
Any marketing strategy is incomplete without a message map. The current market is filled with communications. There’s a lot out there for the customers to take in. So, if you cannot keep them hooked to your brand or product for long, your marketing will be no use. And to do that, you need to map your messages right.

Consider a situation where you have decided to promote your product on both the print media as well as social media.
What will your customers think if you lay out virtually different statements on the two platforms? Yes, both the statements might be eventually pointing to the same goal that you have in mind. But your customers won’t know that. And no one would be patient enough to dig out the hidden goals behind each statement. You need to be consistent on all fronts. And that’s where the message map comes in.

A message map is like a roadmap to all your communications. It is that one thing you want the people to know the most about you. It is a tool that helps you to promote your business in a better way. It simplifies your communications by capturing it all in a single page. A message map helps you plan what to say and when to say it.

So then, how do you make a message map?

1. The first step is to understand your own business.

2. Note down the basic information about your business (your products, your location, the ways in which people can communicate with you, etc.)

3. Then, you need to take a close look at the vision and mission statements that you have set forth. The ultimate goal of all your messages should be to convey these two things to the customers.
Once you have a basic messaging ready, you can then center your other communications in line with it.

With the average attention span of people getting lower and lower, you need to catch your customer’s eye in that split second. That’s why mapping your messages is important before you take on the market.

**Here are some of the advantages of mapping your messages:**

- It helps you to visually represent your messages in a concise format.
- It can be used quickly and understood easily.
- It helps you create your taglines, product descriptions, etc.
- It helps you to keep your message consistent across all platforms. Because absolute consistency is how your story gains a place in your customer’s minds.
- It frames the story for all your future communications.
When you have got your message map ready, then you are ready to plunge into the world of promotions with your marketing strategy. You can then share your story across all the media. And at the same time, you can make sure that the same consistent message appears everywhere - social media, brochures, press releases, website etc.

With so many advantages, you might be inclined to have a big and detailed message map that covers all of your business. But no, that’s not the way to go. Multiple messages do nothing more than to confuse people.

To make your messages effective, remember these simple tips:

- Keep your messages brief and simple.
- Keep them creative. Boring and usual ones are easily forgotten, but the creative ones etch a place in the customers’ mind.
- Make sure they are easy to understand.
- Keep your long-term goals in mind while mapping your messages.
- Keep them flexible so as to incorporate the changes in the future.
And most important of them all, consider how you will support your messages.

It’s one thing to say that you will give the best quality in the market but it takes a lot of effort to actually fulfill that promise. So, prepare your messages in a way that they help you, and not hinder you.
4 Live Out Your Mission

Your company’s vision, mission, goals, and objectives are what drives your business. While your vision gives a glimpse of where you aim to be in the future, your mission is the actual thing which shows why your company exists. Your mission statement is a crucial part of any marketing strategy that you plan. Because ultimately, all your efforts would be aimed at achieving the goals set forth in the mission statement.
So before going to the topic of how to live out your mission statement, you need to understand how to write your mission statement.

Some of the questions you need to keep in mind while writing your mission statement are:

- Why does your company exist?
- What’s the nature of your business?
- How do you wish to serve your customers?
- What does your company really wish to do?

Your mission statement need not be a set of dreams or a long list of statements outlining everything about your company. No. A good mission statement is one that is concise, conveys your strengths to the customers, and most importantly, is realistic. It should be practical, achievable, and measurable at the same time.

Once you have your mission statement ready, then you need to think of how to live out your mission statement.
Just having a perfect mission statement doesn’t end the process, you need to communicate your mission to the customers. Rather than just communicating, you need to make your customers believe in your mission statement. And to do that, you need to believe in your mission.

So then, how can you act out your mission?

While you may be thinking it as a tough task, you will be surprised to see how easy it is to act out your mission.

Keep is consistent

Back in time, sailors used stars in the sky to guide their navigation through the seas and this was the case because these they were fixed points. Accordingly, your mission statement
is something that should be kept consistent. Imagine what customers would think of if they are to find different mission statements in your online and offline publications. It won’t just get the customers to doubt your mission, it will make them think that you yourself don’t know your mission. And if that’s case, how can they trust you to deliver the goals that you say you would. So, it is necessary to keep your mission statement consistent across all your channels.

**Let your mission guide and style your communications**

Marketing is all about communications. You need to communicate with customers and let them know why you are the better choice than your competitors. And while doing that, you need to keep your mission statement in mind. If your mission is to give the best quality to consumers, marketing your product as the one with the least price is the not the way forward. And so, you need to allow your mission statement to guide your communications.

Also, if your mission is to give error-free products and services to your customers, you should make every effort possible to make all your communications error free as well. If the content on your website and in your social media advertisements has a number of errors, customers can only imagine how your products or services might be.
Declare yourself

Your customers won’t know what you have done until you tell it to them. You need to constantly keep advertising your achievements to your customers. And if those achievements are linked to your overall mission, then declaring yourself becomes a must. Say your mission is to give the best quality products and you’ve just had a six sigma workshop at your company, you need to announce it to the world. That way, your customers will know that you are making efforts to live out your mission.

Remember, your mission statement is just a set of words. And the words just tell a story. It’s your actions which will tell the truth. So don’t just say it, live it.
An effective market plan revolves around strategy and tactics. Once the strategic decisions of the marketing plan are done, it is then that we move down to the tactics that are laid out to achieve that marketing plan. The thing you need to decide is how to get your products or services in the hands of the customer. You need to draw up tactics to execute your marketing plan.

While the traditional methods of distributing flyers or putting up posters on strategic locations or placing advertisements
in newspaper and magazines remain at the forefront of a marketing plan, the advent of social media has opened up many new possibilities. It has grown to such heights that it is now nearly impossible to imagine a company or an organization without a website of its own. That’s not all though. Through the internet, it has now become possible to reach a big bunch of audience in quick time and within a reasonable budget.

The number of different tactics that you can employ are:

**OFFLINE METHODS**
- Print advertising
- Television advertisements
- Brochures and flyers
- Press releases
- Setting up interactive stalls at strategic locations, etc.

**ONLINE METHODS**
- Social Media advertising
- Website
- Promotion through emails, etc.

So then, which tactic should you employ? Should you go online which is the need of the hour, or should you go for the
tried and tested offline methods? Yes, the decision is tough, but for a successful marketing strategy, it has to be made.

**This decision as of which tactic to follow mainly depends on:**

- Your goals
- Your target audience
- Type of product that you wish to sell

For example, if your target audience is in the younger demographic, you’ll find them more attracted to the online ways of marketing. It not only allows them to have a nice insight into your product, it takes your product to them. Your product, in this case, will be just a tap away from being discovered. But then again, there are a number of platforms on the internet too (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and many more). Where you choose to market your product can make or break your market strategy. And it once again depends on your target audience.

However, the online tactic may not give you the same dividends if your target audience is in the older section of the age group.
who haven’t yet tapped into the world of internet that much. In that case, you would be best suited to use the traditional methods to market your product.

Apart from the target audience, the type of product or service you sell is a key component in selecting an effective marketing tactic. What type of product will you be selling? What kind of services would you be providing? What quality are you inclined to provide? All these questions form the core of your marketing tactic.

For example, if your product is a mobile phone, you can easily spread out all its features on a piece of paper. In such cases, online marketing would suit you better as it will present your product in the same way as the other tactic would. However, if your product is something like a perfume, customers would most probably prefer a hands-on experience with it and may even like to take in its smell before they decide to buy it. In such cases, the offline marketing tactics like door-to-door marketing or setting up centers in shopping malls and other public places would be more efficient.

While it sounds good to choose one marketing tactic and try and work wonders with it, more often than not, what you need is a combination of different tactics to successfully execute your market plan. Because an effective marketing tactic won’t be the one which just places your product in front of
the customer’s eyes, it would be the one which is able to highli-
ght the qualities of your product in the best possible way. So, it is important to choose the perfect combination of tactics that would work the best for you.

Once you have decided on the marketing tactics, list them down in your marketing strategy and work on how they will help you to reach your goals.
6

Make a Timeline

Your time is precious, have no doubt about that. It is far more valuable than money because you can get more money tomorrow, but you can not get more time. And so, when it comes to formulating an effective marketing strategy, having a good marketing timeline is a must.

Before moving on to the hows and whens of the marketing timeline, let us first understand what a marketing timeline is. Having a solid marketing strategy timeline is the key to any marketing strategy.
A marketing strategy timeline helps you to:

View the chronology of your marketing plan over time.

Identify the objectives and strategies that are completed, the ones are still to be done and the actions that are required to complete them.

Understand when to start working on a specific phase of your marketing strategy in order to realistically set and achieve your deadlines.

Organize your master plan while giving you a clear schedule to follow.

Implement your marketing strategy in a step-by-step manner while ensuring that each step follows the previous.

And that’s why, it remains the most important task of any marketing strategy - making the market strategy timeline.

So then, now that you know the benefits of having a timeline, you might want to know how to create one. Well, the foremost thing to any successful marketing timeline is to keep it simple and easy to follow. With the thought that it needs be complex in order to be good, too many people spend their effort, time and money on just planning to plan. This is not a misprint,
‘planning to plan’ is an actual thing that happens. And eventually, they end up exhausted, even before they start to implement their marketing strategy. So make sure you don’t go down that rabbit hole, instead keep it as simple as possible. At least at the start, the ideal scenario would be to start with a simple one or two-page strategy plan which is easy to understand for everyone and then build on it from there.

The components of a successful timeline will vary depending on the goals you have set, the marketing tactic you have decided to use, the type of product or service that you will be providing, and other such factors. Whether yours is a new business planning to jump into the market or an existing one looking to upgrade its services, the pivotal point to start preparing your marketing timeline is prior to the start date. Your marketing timeline is your vehicle to reach your customers and you want to have that already outlined. Once that is set, you can then effectively work backward and fix the dates of all the phases that will lead to the start date.

Remember to build your schedule around the milestones and deadlines that are to be encountered along the way. And yes, don’t forget the production times. You need time to build an online presence and you need time to produce the materials required for offline marketing too. So those aspects should always be considered while making your timeline.
Consider breaking your marketing strategy into pieces. List down all the steps needed to achieve the goals. Then establish a time frame for both the overall strategy as well as the individual steps. And make sub-timelines for the complex or important steps in your list.

Complications will always arise and some goals will always get delayed due to this reason or the other. So while being strict, your timeline should also be flexible enough to work around such hindrances.

Now, while you can always make your timeline using a simple day-to-day calendar, it would be advisable to use a software such as Excel or any other project management software. It will not only give you a better view of your timeline, it will also be easy to edit when the time comes.

And remember, always follow your timeline, because in business, being late is not an option.
Mind Your Budget

Determining and utilizing the marketing budget of your business in an effective way is a crucial part of the marketing process. Once you have decided the strategies and tactics of your marketing plan, deciding the amount of money to be allocated to each one of them is the next step. Because in the end, the budget is what will decide what you can and cannot afford. So then, how do you decide the budget for your marketing plan?
While it's a usual practice for small businesses to just arbitrarily assign marketing budgets (as some percentage of their revenue or based on their previous year's budget), that is not entirely the right way to go about it. It is always possible that your current marketing tactics may not align with the ones that you employed in the past. And so, it won’t be advisable to have the same marketing budget for a different marketing strategy. Rather, you should look at your goals and objectives of your marketing strategy and set targeted budgets accordingly.

**Generally, your marketing budget would be divided into two categories:**

**One time costs**

Let's say your marketing strategy includes setting up a website for your
company, then hosting the website and buying a domain name for it will feature in your one time costs. Similarly, if you are going for the offline ways of advertising, then preparing the materials for those advertisements will feature in your one time cost.

Recurring costs

Just setting up a website does not solve all your problems. You have to maintain it, regularly post new content on it, and promote it through the many different channels that are available. For all this, you need to constantly dish out money. In the same way, once your advertising material is prepared, you have to distribute it. The costs incurred doing all these will feature in your recurring costs.

You need to carefully plan which of the one time and recurring costs you want to include in your current budget and which ones you can do without for the time being. Your budget should be well-defined, but at the same time, it needs to be flexible too. If a certain marketing strategy is giving you more return on investment as compared to the others, you should be able to increase the budget of that strategy temporarily.

Typically, there are a number of marketing tactics that you
Based on the tactic that you have selected, you need to assign a budget to each of those tactics. At this juncture of planning, you need to decide what things you can do yourself and which ones you need to outsource.

For example, hosting your own website on WordPress would be a cheaper option, but you may not be able to make it as presentable as the professional would. Likewise, you can always create the content for website and advertisements by yourself, but you need to ask yourself if you have the time required to do the task. If not, you have the option of getting
it done by the content writers and graphic designers.

Choosing the most cost-effective option will ensure the overall success of your marketing plan. But always be careful not to decrease the value of your product by not choosing to get some tasks done by the professionals. Ultimately, it’s your business and the overall goals that matter more. Who knows, spending a little extra on marketing can increase your sales by a much larger margin.

Yes, it’s the budget you have at your disposal which defines your options, but make sure that the budget does not limit your options.
However nice the idea of lone warrior sounds, you should get it absolutely clear in your head that you alone cannot do each and everything. Marketing is a vast process and it needs a set of hands if it is to be done efficiently. Otherwise, you might just end up in a shamble of sorts and end up with too much work on hand and no time to finish it.

So, what should you do to carry out all your marketing strategies and that too within the time frame you have set? Well, the answer is really simple. You need to learn the art
of divide and conquer.

Yes, you read it right. As you might know, divide and conquer is the most used military strategy ever and it is used even today.

How to apply a military strategy in the world of marketing you ask?

It’s easy. All you need to do is smartly divide the work in order to conquer your goals.

Once you have fixed the tactics to be used, the marketing material printed and ready, and your messaging perfectly mapped out, it’s the time to act. You need to implement your tactics. And in order to do that, you need to distribute whatever marketing material you have in your hands, you need to reach out to your customers.

If you haven’t hired a professional, here are some of the ways in which you can divide the work to carry out the required tasks:
Distributing brochures and flyers

Once you have your brochures and flyers printed, you can assign some members of your staff to distribute them for you. You can have them distributed at some promotional events, trade-shows, at some local entertainment spots, and many different such places. Many times you may need separate teams to cater to distribution at more than one spot at the same time.

Depending on the strength of your staff, you need to decide how many you can set aside for such a task. If you don’t have enough people to do it, you can always hire some outsiders on a daily basis to do the job for you.

Social media presence

Your marketing doesn’t stop by just creating a website or a social media account, you need to keep posting content on your website and make your social media presence felt. At first, you should always take a look at these extra qualities that your staff might possess. Someone who has a way with words can be asked to write the content for your website. Someone who is more active on social media and knows the ins and outs of that world may be asked to handle your social media accounts. And if you can’t find that someone in your staff, you can always outsource the task to a professional
Interviews and other communication

Giving out interviews to the local media outfits is one way of staying in focus and promoting your brand. If you have decided on your marketing strategy to go down that route too, then sooner or later you will have to face the cameras. Now it may happen that you have the mind to run the business, but you’re not really a camera person. In such case, you can always ask some other member of your business to face the stuff, or suck it up and do it yourself.

Now, even if you’re good with facing the cameras, you do not need to be there for all of the interviews. Your presence like (Sambuno).
is needed only for the important ones. So again, you can let
the other members of your organization handle the other
interviews.

Also, if your marketing strategy includes getting on the phone
with your customers, it is obvious that you cannot talk to each
and every potential customer. You need to assign a team of
dedicated personnel who would talk to the customers and
promote your product.

So divide the work you have in your hands and you will be
able to effectively implement your marketing strategies in
order to achieve your goals.
You should never see marketing as something that you could just set into motion and then forget. Marketing is an endless process. It is a loop where you constantly need to review your efforts and adjust your course. There’s no single point when you can claim that it’s the end of your marketing campaign. And yet, measuring the effectiveness of your marketing strategy can be seen as the final piece in the puzzle.

Measuring the effectiveness of your marketing strategies not only shows you the effects of your current marketing ef-
forts, but it also paves the way for all your future endeavors. You may have rolled out many different strategies in order to achieve your marketing goals. But you know that not all the strategies will give the same results. Measuring the effectiveness allows you to determine which of the strategies are working and which ones are not.

Ultimately, the idea is to control and improve your business success.

So then, how will you measure the effectiveness of your marketing strategies?

Here are some of the ways in which you can do that:

Sales and Revenue

This is a no-brainer, right? After all, that's the foremost way to evaluate anything related to your business. Your sales are the perfect indicators of whether your marketing strategy has been successful or not. If your sales have increased after you rolled out your new marketing strategy, it means it is working. If not, well then you need to think of something else to draw customers to you.
Return on Investment

Your return on investment is indirectly related to your sales. It is the profit you receive after deducting the expenses incurred behind your marketing efforts. It may happen that your profits have increased after you started to promote your brand on social media. Contrarily, you may not have received the expected profits by releasing the advertisements on television. So in the end, you know which strategy is giving you the maximum return on investment and that’s the marketing strategy that you need to focus more on.
Market Behavior

Though indirect, market behavior is also one of the ways to measure the effectiveness of your marketing strategy. If you have started to tap into a new consumer base, it shows a successful implementation of your marketing strategy. If giving an advertisement to the local magazine has allowed you to gain new customers, you know that that could be one of the ways forward in the future too.

Customer Satisfaction

Your profits matter. But ultimately, it's the satisfaction of your customers that makes your business successful. If a customer is satisfied with your product, he/she will recommend it to others as well. If you're able to identify exactly which of your methods is leading up to satisfy the customers, you will know which of the strategy is working for you.

Website

Your website is one of those direct indicators that allow you to measure the effectiveness of your marketing strategy. It may happen that your website has always been there but it may not be receiving the kind of response it needs to. Say
you run a little advertisement on the radio and your website views double in a fortnight. So you know that it is that advertisement which led people to search for you over the internet. Likewise, you can easily measure the effectiveness of your other marketing strategies with it too.

**Competitor’s Response**

This is an indirect way, but still, a very effective way to track the performance of your marketing strategies. If your marketing strategies are working, if they are making the customers think, then they are sure to make your competitors think as well. And what will they do when they notice its success? They will try to copy it too. It will be a perfect indicator for you to admire the efforts of your marketing. On the other hand, if the competitors just ignore your marketing strategies, you may want to think of what is it that you’re lacking.

It is not that easy to exactly measure the performance of your marketing tactics. But if done rightly and regularly, it will save you both time and money.
Change is the only constant in this world. And with time, the bases on which you have pitched forth your marketing strategies will change. It would have been easy if that was the only thing. But the real thing is, you, or rather, your marketing plans have to change with every little change in the world around you. If you don’t, you can easily end up spending too much of your time and money on strategies that won’t bring in results.

Just like you need a million other lies to cover for one lie you
said long ago, any big or small change that you think of having in your marketing strategy will need many more changes on the organizational level of your business. You have to devote your time and money in order to stay up-to-date with the current marketing world. But trust me, it is worth the effort.

Depending on the type of business you own, you should look back at your marketing strategies once a month, on a quarterly basis, once in six months, or at least once in a year. Having a greater time period than that will make you complacent to changes. If you allow your marketing team to get used to a set of things for too long, there is every possibility that they will resist changes when you roll them out. That's why it's good practice to at least get them working their brains on a regular basis.

Here are some of the ways in which you can stay current:

**Industry trends**

The trends in the industry will keep on changing every now and then. And you don’t want to miss out on them at all. A little slip from you and your competitor will pounce on the opportunity. You don’t want that to happen.

And so, the first and foremost thing you should do is keep
a close eye on the trends going about in your industry. You should always know how your competitors are marketing their products and what changes they are bringing in their marketing strategies. If it’s working for them, there is every chance that it may work for you as well. Always keep your marketing strategies flexible to change with the changes.

**Social Media**

Social media is the perfect indicator of the change trends happening. It’s highly unlikely that a change in trend will go unnoticed on social media. And so, you should always monitor
the various sources. Follow peers in your industry and see what they are talking about. Look out for the trending items on sites like Facebook and Twitter. Subscribe to the blogs and newsletters of your industry experts. In short, you should have all the latest news right there on your computer screen. Once you know what the buzz is on the social media, you can easily align your marketing strategies so that you make full use of the current trends.

**Brainstorming**

This is an internal exercise that will help you massively. Gather the people in your marketing team or just some random employees of your company and ask them to brainstorm on the current industry trends. Ask them where they read their news, what are their means of staying up-to-date is. There is always a possibility that even after all the efforts, you may have missed on some of the trends. You can also ask their views on the current marketing strategy and what changes they think could help your business grow more. A little brainstorming session every now and then can work wonders.

**Customer feedback**

And last but not least, look out for the changing behavior of your customers. The customer feedback will help you track the
mood of your customers. If they no longer use the platform that you have been using to attract them, there would be no point in you to continue marketing your product and or services there.

Be a little smart and reap the benefits by keeping your marketing plan relevant and up-to-date.
Part 2
What is Guerilla marketing and how can I use it?

Lack of financial resources is the main problem of most new businesses. Most of the funds they acquire go into setting up the business. And so when the time comes to market their products, they don’t have enough resources.

But the question here is, how much exactly is enough?
Well, that depends on what methods you employ for marketing. If you go by the traditional methods, you’ll often find your pockets empty. Instead, use Guerilla marketing and you can make the most of your resources. It is nothing else than a smarter way of traditional marketing.

**What is Guerilla Marketing?**

In the simplest of words, it is just a low cost advertising method. It helps to efficiently promote your product using unpaid or less-paid means. It is just an unconventional approach to marketing. A marketing strategy that will maximize your goals while utilizing minimal of your resources.

Guerilla marketing puts the small businesses right in touch of the customers. Instead of money, it believes in investing time into marketing. And in turn, it quickly promotes your product for little or no money.

**How to use it?**

Guerilla marketing just asks one thing from you -

**YOUR IMAGINATION!**
To make it effective, you need to think out of the box. You need to be creative and promote your business at each and every occasion.

**Get to the streets**

Yes, literally, get on the streets. Guerilla marketing is not about those big hoardings, or expensive social media campaigns. No. It is all about doing those small little things in a creative way.

It doesn’t matter which city you’re in, there will always be that one street that will be full of people. And that’s what you need, right? All those people getting to know about your product all at once. But the question is, why would they do that?

And that’s where your creativity comes into picture. If you can make the always-busy people spare a glance, the job is done. People may forget the advertisement they watch everyday on their television. But they’ll never forget a Guerilla running the streets.

**Small things, big goals**

Do you own a paint industry? How about organizing a painting competition then? Get the people to paint with your colours? Or do you manufacture cameras? Why not take a tour on a pho-
tography expedition then? Give people a hands-on experience with your product. Sounds nice, right? That’s Guerilla marketing for you.

Remember, opportunities are everywhere. All you need to do is grab it. Keep your eyes and ears open to all those small little things happening around you. A moment will come where you can market your product. And that’s what you have to latch on to. Doing small little things for the community will help you to achieve your big goals.

Harness the social media

Social media is the most important piece in this puzzle called marketing. It is one of those platforms where you can promote your product free of cost. When marketing with social media, the prime investment is time. If you give your precious time to it, social media will give you the required results.

But don’t just blindly follow the crowd there. Be smart, be innovative. Host contests, generate polls, start a rewards scheme. Do anything and everything to stand out from the crowd.

Social media is a big jungle where the sheep get lost easily. And nowadays, no one wastes time to find the lost ones. So if you want to stand out in the jungle, there is just one way to do it. You
have to be a Guerilla.

Remember, marketing is not just about money. Time and creativity are equally important. From now, don’t let the lack of budget hamper your marketing strategies. Use the Guerilla marketing and make the most of what you have.
2

Everyone is doing Social Media Wrong - Here is how to use it the smart way

Social Media!

In today’s technology driven world, this is one thing everyone is connected to. Everyone is on social media. And social media is everywhere. So what does this tell you? Well, the answer is simple. Whatever marketing strategy you cook up, social media
has to be the main ingredient of it.

**You already knew this, right?**

Then why’s it that you’re still not reaping the benefits of it? Why are you not able to attract the customers out there?

It may be because you’re doing what everyone else is doing. And let’s get this straight - everyone is doing the social media wrong!

So what’s the right way you ask? Here’s how you can use the social media in a smart way.

**Less is more**

There are a number of different social media platforms out there. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, and many more. While it’s good to have options, having too many is a bane. Marketing your product on all of social media is an utter waste of time.

**Some of the disadvantages of being on all of social media:**

Your efforts get distributed
So, avoid being everywhere at the same time. Instead, focus your efforts on any one or two selected platforms only. The selection will depend on the type of customers you serve. For this, initial customer profiling is a must.

Once you know where your customers, market your products there. Remember, less is more.

**Open, Connect, and keep connecting**

Did you open a social media account? Were you really active there for some time? Did you connect with people there? And finally, did you forget about it after a while?

Yes, most of you out there make this very basic mistake. You open a social media account, and then forget about it over time. There may be different reasons why you did that.
Whatever may be the reason, that's definitely not the smart thing to do. Once you start connecting with the customers over social media, you need to persist with it. The moment customers find out that you are no longer interested in them, they'll vanish.

Never, I repeat, never let your social media account into a hibernation.

**Don’t just sell, connect**

Remember, social media is not just to sell your products. It has a far greater purpose than that.

If you just keep advertising your product, the customers will soon get tired of it. And tired customers are definitely not good for business. Instead, what you should do is try and make a nice rapport with your customers. Post useful information about your product. Listen to the problems your customers face. Solve it. No,
not just solve it, but broadcast the efforts that you take to solve it.

So, don’t just sell your products, connect with your customers. More the customers start to like you, more they will buy your product.

**Always stay presentable**

All the talks of not judging a book by its cover is rubbish. Everyone does that.

The display picture of your page is your first impression on social media. Then comes the background you choose. And finally all the content your share. These are certainly not the things where you should cut the costs. Get them done by a professional graphics designer if you must.

Just like you would do in any face-to-face meeting, always stay presentable.

Be smart in the way you use social media and it’ll effectively give you the required returns.
Attract your potential customers by creating informative content that helps them make a decision

In the world of marketing, content is everything. Any marketing strategy you cook up is as good as the content you provide for it. Just having a good looking website is not enough. And neither is
spending hours on social media. The only thing that attracts the customers is your content.

There are a number of different ways through which you can share content with your customers. Here are the two most popular ones.

**Blogging**

Hosting a blog is one of the most used means to share the content. Apart from their website, every leading organization hosts a blog of their own. Some have blogs to give information about their products. Some blogs are like manuals that explain how their product works. While the others provide the informative content related to their product. That’s what you should be looking to do too.

Yes, it’s lucrative to feature your product in each and every thing you share. But that’s not always the best thing to do. Overdose of advertising kills the customer’s interest in your product. And that is where blogging helps you.

A blog provides you that indirect way to advertise your product. For example, let’s say you manufacture solar panels. Now, if you just keep repeating, “Buy solar panels, buy solar panels,” people may not buy them. Instead, you can post a blog
explaining how electricity bills are emptying their pockets. This will get them thinking. And then when you advertise your solar panels, the customers will think of that as an alternative. It’s just a smarter way of convincing the customers.

Also, hosting a blog is pretty easy. Platforms like Google Blogger and WordPress host them for free.

And if you’re looking for more exposure, you can even try your hand at guest blogging. It is you writing a content to be published on some other blog. But if the readers like your content, they’ll always come looking for you. It’ll guarantee some free traffic to your blog.
Vlogging

Words sell, but videos sell faster.

Vlog is something where you share the content in the form of videos. But just making a video about anything won’t do. Just like in blogging, you need to understand the trick behind it.

You see, no one wants to watch a video of you constantly advertising your product. The moment they find you boring, people will hop on to the next big thing. Always remember, don’t be boring.

Whenever you create a vlog, make it as informative as possible. Don’t just stick to what your product is. Instead, tell the people how it works, explain stuff to them. Encourage viewers to share the problems they face with your product. Then, make a video showing how to solve those problems. Show a little something of how you make your products. If you take some special precaution to ensure the quality, highlight it. The more information you put into it, the better it will be.

Apart from posting this videos on your website, you can share them on YouTube too. The more they get shared, more people will know about your brand.

Both, hosting a blog or creating a video can be done free of
cost. The only thing they demand is some of your time. Because creating content is quick and easy. But creating good informative content is a work of an artist.

However, it's perfectly alright if you don't know how to create neat content. Your talent is doing business, and you’re good at it. So you can always assign the task of creating content to others. If you seek the help of professionals, you may have to pay a huge sum to get the work done. Instead, you can hire freelancers to do the job for you. That way, you will have good informative content for a reasonable price.
Use magnets like contests and giveaways to pull customers into your business

You sell your products and make money. But give something free with it and you will make much more money. Yes, everyone loves the free stuff. It is like a magnet that will pull the customers into your business.
Humans are the most unsatisfied species out there. No matter how much they have, they will always crave for more. And if they find out you’re giving something more, they’ll throng you like nothing. So what is this extra something that you can give them?

There are a number of different things that attract the customers.

**Contests**

Nothing attracts the customers more than a contest. It’s that chance to win something which pulls them to your brand. And guess what, it doesn’t always have to be big.

The little lucky draw contests have been used since ages. Every customer who buys from you automatically enrolls in the draw. Depending on the reward, the number of customers you get will vary. But it will surely be more than your usual days. You will get hundreds, or even thousands of customers. And then all you need to do is pick one or two lucky winners. The investment is very little compared to the expected profits.

The contests are not just limited to the physical world either. The idea of contest will sell equally on the social networks as well. Consider you are launching a new product. You have the name finalized, but are stuck on the tagline. What to do? Well, start an online contest. Ask the people to write a caption for your
product. Lure them in with a reward if the caption is selected. Not only will you get a nice enough tagline, the name of your brand will be shared all over.

Apart from increasing your customers, contests are a rich source of data too. As the customers enroll is, they will provide their information with it. And having that much information on your hands is priceless. Not only that, contests make the customers market your product for you. The word-of-mouth carries to far more places than what you would have reached with your marketing tactics.

**Giveaways**

Giveaway marketing is a limited time offer. Here, you give the customers something free for a limited period of time. Usually, such offers only last day. But the impact they make on the sales of your product are huge.

The question here is, how would your products benefit by giving it for free?

The primary catch here is again the word-of mouth. By giving away your product for free, you’re giving the customers a hands-
on experience of it. If your product is good, the customers are definitely going to like it. And what would they do when they like it? They’ll spread that word around. From their family members to their friends, everyone will know how good your product is. A review from a trusted person makes a huge impact on the customer’s decisions. And that’s where you will score.

Giving it free to one person will make ten others buy your product.

**Gifts**

If contests and giveaways are the big magnets, gifts are the smaller ones. The idea here is to gift each and every customer who buys from you. Sometimes, you may gift a customer just to visit your store too. Unlike contests and giveaways, the gifts don’t need to be very big ones. It can be small little things to be used in day-to-day life. Key chains, pen stand, fridge magnets, wall clock, or just a bag with your name on it.

Remember, the aim is to get the name of your brand out there. Once your name reaches the customers, they are sure to visit you. Some ways will attract the customers faster. While the others will pull them in slowly. But this small budget marketing tactics are sure to bring in benefits for you.
Work with your partners to share information

Partners play a key role in promoting your business and helping your business excel. They help you succeed in your business ventures whilst you too can aide them in certain ways, thus creating a win-win situation for both parties. Some well-established partners may also help you in winning the trust of your customer base. Thus, helping your business flourish in more ways than one. You can utilize the potential of making partners
as shown in the points listed below.

**How to work with your partners?**

If you have the love for what you are doing and passion for expanding it, no power in the world can stop you! However, smart work always works better than hard work, so think and shake hands with some beneficial partners to divide your work and proliferate.

**Networking, a crucial stepping stone**

One of the critical jobs for a business to succeed is to form networks, and not just any network but one that can help you in a number of ways. You can network with people of interest
in various ways such as seminars, conferences etc. Seem confident, diligent and establish a good rapport in the very first introduction. Sow the seeds now, and reap the benefits later on. A fine network that has great partners is the key to a successful business.

**Mail Marketing**

Marketing is a major factor in a business. However, marketing on your own, for a small business, burns a big hole in the wallet. So, in order to avoid that, you can combine your marketing strategies with an established partner and be doing a favor for them in return. For example, you can place your business cards in the waiting area of their customers. So, just like the lichens, the true mantra to survive in this competitive world full of bugs is symbiotic relationships.

**Partnerships**

The main question that must arise in your mind is whom to partner with? Don’t worry, we are here to help. The world out there is full of potential partners. Anyone with a well-known business, source of raw products or a selling platform, can be a potential partner. You just need to realize two aspects of a partnership and then you will be easily able to look for your potential partner.
And, the two aspects are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you expect him/her to do for you</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What can you do in return for him/her</td>
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Once, you are clear on these two aspects you can easily find a partner and then expand your business and take to greater heights.

**Social Media**

Social media is a wide platform to promote your business in various ways. There are thousands of people out there looking to buy your product for a discount. But, they can’t reach you. So, in order to solve this big issue in small bucks, the easiest way is to send some gifts to any well-known personality with millions of followers. They can use your products or services and thus add stories or posts favoring your business. This will not only help you expand your business but the blogger or celebrity is also getting free gifts on the go.

**Referral code system**
You can also use- or maybe, a much better word would be, reward - your customers to help expand your customer base. In this big market, nothing works magic, like the verbal evidence and appreciation. You can start a referral system in which if your customer asks his or her friend or relative to buy some service or some product from your site, he or she gets some reward points that can be used later on, or some percentage of discount. This would not only help you expand your customer base but also excite your existing customers to shop more and spread the news. Thus creating a win’-win situation for both you and your customer.

Therefore, use these marketing strategies and take your business to great heights.
6
What are scalable marketing channels and how can I use them

In today’s modern technological world, the most popular way of communication or marketing is internet and the cherry on top is the fact that it is quite cheaper than the conventional modes of marketing such as newspapers and television. Today, most of the people barely watch television or read the newspaper, because
everything they need is available on the internet and they have easy access to any information they require. So, think beyond the traditional borders and use these modern technological ways to promote your business.

**How to use the power of the scalable marketing channels?**

Here, we have listed below some out-of-the-box ideas that can help you expand your business from scratch.

**Internet; a pool of customers**

The Internet is a pool full of customers. All you need to do is fish out the potential customers who need your products or services. For this purpose, you can spread ads of your business all over different famous websites such as Facebook, Myntra, Google, Jabong etc. One of the most powerful ways for this purpose is Google pay per click ads and facebook ads. You can do this by simply registering yourself, uploading the ad and then paying only if someone clicks on it.

Here, it hooks your potential customers and expands your customer base.

This is the most cost-efficient method for reaching out to a larger population.
Telephone messages

There are times when we have issues while using various products. To solve these issues we may contact the customer service. If it’s a major issue, they tend to transfer the calls to their executives or seniors while putting the customer on hold for a while. The companies then use this time interval for strategic marketing by placing ads that promote other products produced by them.

So, grab this opportunity with both hands and make full use of it. This is also a very cost-efficient way for you to expand your business since they charge a really nominal fee. And, if the customer likes your ad then he can contact you. Thus, hooking more and more potential customers.
Mail offers

It can be commonly noticed that even though people love a certain product, they usually wait for a sale season for the prices to fall in order to purchase them.

So, rather than making them wait, you can give them vouchers for them to shop as early as possible. You can also send them special holiday discounts, end of season sale vouchers, birthday coupons, surprise rewards and many more in their mailing list. Sometimes this can make people who never thought of buying your product to start consider buying it as it's up for sale. And, if your customer really likes the deal then they would ask their friends and relatives to score that deal. Once again expanding your customer base.

Real-time marketing

You can also do some real-time marketing by sticking car magnets and bumper stickers on some cabs. In case you own a retail shop, then you can stick some exciting and new offers on the windows of your shop. In the meantime, your very own near and dear ones can help promote your business amongst their friend circles. You can also post your advertisements on the email signatures and some letterheads of holiday cards.

So, even if you are low on money, you can use these effective
ways to promote your budding business and save money while, at the same time, targeting a greater audience.

All these methods will not only help you expand your customer base but also help you excite your existing customers to purchase more.

Go on and show the world what you’ve got. As per the famous saying; people buy what they see. Show them, if they love it, they will grab it.
Media holds great power in its hands. It is known to make or break some strong and powerful people. When used in the right way, media will market your product absolutely free. All you need to do is make the media love you.

Do you feel like it’s easier said than done? Well, you’re wrong. It is actually really easy to attract the media. Media is just like a bee. It keeps searching for people to suck stories out of them.
Just emit the right fragrance, and you will have the media at your doorstep.

So, what can you do to make the media love you?

Help the community

There’s nothing that gets to the media as some social work. There are many things that you can do to help the community.

- Host a blood donation camp
- Start a tree plantation drive
- Host contest to gather funds for relief purposes, etc

These are some very simple tasks. They will hardly need a day out of your busy lives. But the amount of exposure they can give you is huge. Just don’t forget to notify the media of your efforts.

Once the media finds out, it will be there to cover your social work. And once the media is there, you know how to market your products. A small little work will help you get your brand across the region.
Host some formal seminars

Have many seminars have you attended? There must be many, right? Well, have you noticed the logos of hosting organization everywhere? Did you notice how the media covered the whole event? If yes, then you have your answer.

Hosting some formal seminars can be a great opportunity to invite the media. You get to address the delegates present there. You get to sing some praises of your business. And through the media, you get to reach all the other people that are not present there.
Be the talk of the town

Remember the big queues outside the stores for Iphone launch? Were you standing in one too? Even if you weren’t, there is very little possibility that you may have missed the news. It was on most of the news channels and in most of the news papers. Well, that’s exactly what you need.

If you feel your business is suddenly slowing down, do something out of the box. Maybe host some contests with a big prize. Or reduce the prices of your products for a day. Or maybe even distribute them for free. Anything that attracts a huge crowd attracts the media too. And with media comes some free promotion.

So be the talk of the town and media will carry you to many more towns.

Interviews

And last but not the least, give interviews. Participate in the talk shows. Take part in the debates. There will be means where you will need to pay your way in. Do that. If media provides you mass promotion for some amount, there’s no harm in it.

Apart from this, there are also websites where you can register for being interviewed. The journalists that don’t have other
important things to cover will definitely contact you. And once the bee it attracted, it’s your job to convey the whole story.

But whatever you do, always remember that media is just a medium. You should never succumb to just luring the media in. Throwing a lot of money into an event just to get some media attention is a no-brainer. Because doing that, you may just push a switch and make the media hate. That could be a lot fatal for your business.

So yes, you need to make the media love you. It assures you some nice free promotion. But your real target should always be the customers.

Ultimately, it’s the love of customers that will grow your business.
Help others because that is how you help yourself

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.”
- Charles Dickens

When discussing businesses or market strategy, most people frame an image of a person deceiving another to gain some valuable advantage. Does any market strategy support or demand this frame of thought? No, absolutely not. When we
view from a business perspective, ‘Competition’ is definitely the cruelest factor of all, but it does not involve isolating people for one’s own benefit.

When an organization identifies a solution to their client’s problem, they first integrate several processes to provide the client with a sense of job completion.

Have you ever heard the mobile brand name ‘Xiaomi’, Most of us have. Do you know why? Because its MI series has helped their consumer achieve what they aspired for years and in return this is what they have gained; a multi-billion dollar revenue.

Why am I preaching the slogan “Help others because that is how you help yourself” in the marketing sector? Here’s why,

**‘Helping someone can be fruitful and advantageous even in the business sector’**

is what I aim to deliver through this article. I would take the example of the exemplary success that MI was able to register worldwide with its approach.

Mobile Internet, abbreviated as MI, series created a brand out
of itself and has revolutionized the way major brands and businesses operate. The smartphones series launched by Xiaomi was a huge hit, and tremendous success followed its flagship products each year. The brand has achieved an unbelievable response by providing the most essential products at the most affordable prices.

Internet was booming in 2010 and mobile phones were turning into a necessity, being a luxurious item owned by rich people. There was a requirement of SmartPhones rather than simple mobile phones. These mobiles were required to increase communication and change the manner people lived their life. There were smartphones available at that point in time but they were expensive. For example, brands such as iPhone.

Then came the Xiaomi’s MI series. What did they do to become so big? Let’s check them out.

**Target Audience**

Targeting the correct audience as per the product is one of the most prominent things for any business. Quality definitely matters, but the number of sales is also equally important for any successful marketing strategy. This quantity of sales depends upon the audience that is targeted by the firm for the product.
MI managed to target the largest customer base in the entire world, which is the average middle-class people. This helped them to receive their current customer base with each product of their smartphone series.

**Price Matters**

After deciding the target audience for the product it’s essential to decide the price range of the product accordingly. After prices are set as per the target audiences range, all that is required is marketing. For marketing purposes, guerilla marketing techniques, social media marketing, and several contests can be conducted by the firm.

**User Review Matters**

Users reviews are most valuable for any brand. User reviews are mostly considered as genuine and standard in any industry. And these user reviews are positive only when the brands helps the users to achieve something they had aspired to achieve.

Brands who entertain the demands and requirements of their audience receive the best possible outcome for themselves.

That is what a great and successful marketing strategy demands
Thinking out of the box is definitely one thing that hails your success at marketplace. But helping people with their requirements through one’s product or service takes it to a level where the brand creates its own market and audience. They rule this market and monopolistic environment for themselves. The customer base with their quality service and completion of customer’s requirements.

“A brand is worthless if it doesn’t connect with the right audiences in a relevant way.”