

Marketing Rule Number One: No "Ifs, Ands or Buts"...Except for This One Caveat

How often have you come up against a "firm" wall of resistance only to find after some delicate finagling that you were able to eke out a smidge of wiggle room? Was it simply a red herring that was placed in your path? Why did the firm stance you encountered quickly dissolve upon the offer of counter resistance?

It can seem nowadays, aside from that impenetrable fortress known as the "retail clerk" down at the local bookstore who never (ever) budes on the price of a paperback, life is surprisingly flexible despite pretense otherwise. But how much of that initial resistance is really just "posturing", and how much is a reasonable attempt to provide the best situation for both parties involved? And, how can your understanding of this "flexibility dynamic" to marketing gain you a competitive advantage?

Sadly but appropriately, you will almost never know, nor be able to find a reasonable *tell* that will reliably gives you the edge you are seeking. However, knowing that you will never be 100% certain there is wiggle room to be had doesn't preclude you from success in understanding the flexibility rule. Before we continue on how to take advantage of this rule, I suppose now would be a terrific opportunity to share the rule in its full glory...

Marketing Rule #1: There is always (almost) room to maneuver, be agile and re-scope your position or dealt hand, even if largely inconsequential in the long run (chances are it won't be). This is also known as the "No ifs, ands, or buts" rule. And yes, I made that last part up just right now.

The good news is that much of the flexibility exhibited in negotiating the marketplace stems from this rule. In other words, if you go into a negotiation, say, with your business partner about a purchase you can be pretty certain there is some ground to be given not matter how bleak the outcome looks. Similarly, when you enter an arrangement for services with a vendor, or seek to develop some ridged marketing plans, you can assume there is some sort of tweak...some movement to be had to gain you an advantage. That is primarily why in house purchasing, people tend to offer lowball bids—there is an assumption that your initial price is not exactly firm...rather, it is a sort of starting point to negotiate. When you launch into your plans, you must use them as a sort of starting point.

Here's an illustration of what I mean about starting points: when I go to stores to purchase something (even if it's just a light bulb), I almost always ask for a discount. And you know what? I pretty much always get one. Some might say that is cheap – which quite possibly it is. I say that after a few tries you'll come to see the benefit of saving several hundreds of dollars over time. But the important aspect I want you to consider is that I am using the price given as the "starting point".

So how does this help you in practical terms? And, are you always to seek a discount? Is the article just about shaving 10% off light bulbs?

Whether or not you seek a discount really is a matter of preference. But, the way you deal with resistance, and by extension, your marketing strategy is largely affected by the "flexibility rule" and where you consider your starting point to be. One of the biggest errors you can make in determining a strategy or marketing plan is to suggest you have

no room for deviation from your plan. To be inflexible is to be inefficient. To be inflexible is to be unrealistic...and as we've covered here, not beneficial to your business success.

Always plan on some flexibility as you launch into your venture. Prepare to adhere to your marketing plans, projections, and finer points of who you will represent in your brand identity as much as possible...but also be open to responding to the market around you because, again, in reality all your initial planning is just a starting point.

Let me add this final prompt: solidifying your brand and delivering on your "promise" is all well and good. Being bullheaded and inflexible and not embracing agility will kill your business no matter how good you plan is. It has long been recognized that true success is mostly "failure" and then responding to that failure by determining how to navigate from that point on. If some of our most passionate, successful inventors were inflexible, we'd not have those light bulbs I like to save money on so much.

As you develop your marketing plans be sure to include a healthy dose of rule number one in your plans. Use the rule of flexibility to ensure your success both in business and personal endeavor. Both you and your business will be more successful because of it.