

10 Signs You've Lost Your Marketing Mojo

It's easy to be plugged in to marketing trends when you're an entrepreneur because as the business' leader you wear all the hats, including Chief Marketer and Brand Evangelist. But as your business starts to grow, you grow with it. And like any good CEO, you learn to delegate, to surrender certain responsibilities to others, who have the passion and skill needed to focus on a single division, such as finance, IT or marketing.

As you delegate and shift your focus elsewhere, it's easy to lose touch. And although few CEOs are comfortable second-guessing their CFO — and even fewer seem at ease playing armchair quarterback to their CIO, or head IT person — almost everyone feels equipped to tread on the CMO, or marketing director.

But it's almost always a bad idea. Truth is, marketing is more data-fueled and tech driven than ever — and what was true when you were wearing all the hats is different now. Very different. To help prevent you from embarrassing yourself, here are 10 things which, if uttered aloud, will only prove that your marketing mojo has left the building:

1. “We should put out more press releases.”

No, we shouldn't. Press releases serve a great purpose: alerting the media to significant developments within your company as they relate to the community at-large. Spewing vanity releases — the kind that try really hard to make nothing sound like something — is a sure-fire way to alienate journalists and media contacts. If you've done your job right and hired a competent marketing director, rest assured that person is well aware of how and when to issue a press release. Trust your team.

2. “Our blog doesn't promote the company enough.”

Yes, it does — because gone are the days when SEO was less complicated and blogging about the company all day long would be enough to generate a little traffic or boost search engine rankings. More importantly, audiences have become more sophisticated and they'll no longer tolerate self-promoting corporate hype.

3. “There's no value in social media.”

Actually, there is. For starters, it influences traffic because search engines use social signals to figure out how your page should rank in results for specific keywords. And while the percentage of traffic from social may appear to be the smallest segment of traffic to your site, there's a long-term effect that most CEOs fail to take into consideration. Plus, social media is just one cog in your marketing team's wheel; it's very unlikely they're “wasting time” on it.

4. “I want to defend our reputation on Twitter.”

Let's talk. While it's great that you have a presence on social media, you need to understand that social networks draw all types and, quite often, these “attacks on our

reputation,” don’t add up to much. That said, you have a marketing team that would be happy to craft a helpful response to any posts you’re especially concerned about, so let them handle it. You may also want to check out the profiles of other executives on social media, (see how good they are about ignoring haters and engaging fans?). And, truth be told, some of these “attacks” are really learning opportunities; why not use them to strengthen our product offering, or operations?

5. “This content won’t grow sales.”

It won’t grow sales *today*, maybe. But here’s the thing: content serves multiple needs. What your micro-focus fails to take into consideration is the longer-range perspective that marketers rely on to generate the volume of leads that sales requires. The content your marketing team creates today will generate long-term traffic that will trigger sales in the future. It takes time to build up such a program — and the top of the funnel is just as important as the bottom.

6. “We should attend more trade shows to increase demand gen.”

Nope. Times have changed and the odds of meeting a new prospect at a trade show and closing them shortly thereafter is lower perhaps than at any time in history. Today’s buyers do most of their research online, not at trade shows. Basically, trade shows are good for two things: to generate brand awareness at the very top of the funnel (much more expensively, mind you, than inbound methods); and, at the bottom of the funnel, enabling salespeople to meet with prospects they’ve already been in touch with, so they can close deals in person. But the latter varies according to the industry you’re in and assumes multiple parties won’t be involved in the purchasing decisions. But trade shows not good for generating new demand.

7. “Market feedback is a time-suck.”

Seriously? If you’re not going to listen to the market and your customers, you may not be in business for long. Surveying customers and performing market research is a nod to the fact that today the customer is in control of your brand more than ever. You may think of yourself as an innovator, but your company’s innovations need to be balanced against the needs of the customer. Even Steve Jobs’ Apple — arguably the most innovative company in your lifetime — is an avid user of NPS surveys.

8. “Let’s rebrand the company to better communicate our value.”

Doh! Time for a reality check: times have changed and rebranding now carries even more risk than it did in the past because modern brands are built one interaction (and one message) at a time. If you think people are overlooking the value of what you offer, your business probably needs an updated positioning strategy more than a rebrand. Plus, a lot of branding agencies aren’t that knowledgeable when it comes to SEO. So, they won’t be looking out for you in that regard. And if you overhaul your messaging, you risk undoing any SEO work that you’ve completed up to this point.

9. “Our homepage needs an overhaul.”

Yes, your homepage is still the main entryway to your website — but its significance to visitors is not what it used to be. That’s because it’s no longer the “internet billboard” of days gone by. Today, it’s more like a traffic cop, telling visitors how to get to the information they’re looking for. Every page created with new content essentially functions as a “side door.” So, each page created from blog posts, sub-pages, etc., likely accounts for more of the initial visits to your site.

10. “It’s normal for Sales and Marketing to be at odds.”

That’s true, but not productive. In the past — before the availability of clear, easy-to-understand closed-loop reporting — it was tougher for Marketing to prove its case. Sales, on the other hand, could always point to sales figures. Today, marketers have more tools and data at their fingertips to prove “things are working.” As CEO, wouldn’t you like to see these vital departments in alignment?

Marketing is a field that’s grown enormously complex over the past five years or so, and no one expects the CEO to serve as the go-to authority for every department in the company.

If you suspect your marketing mojo isn’t what it used to be, trust that your business will be well served by recognizing your marketing team understands current best practices and future trends. These are the people you can rely on to bridge the gap between your marketing practices of the past, and the way things should be done going forward.