The 5 Rs of marketing

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Success never gets easier. Companies always operate in the pressure-cooker environment of having to constantly hone the strategic edge that keeps them ahead of competitors in the seemingly endless battle to win and keep customers.

Building your company’s (or brand’s) name and reputation is one key way to strengthen that competitive advantage and improve your market position. It’s the single most important thing a marketing manager can do. Here are five messaging tips that can help you shape every communications project or campaign you undertake:

1. **Relevance.** The identity or message you create must be relevant to the target market so potential buyers can readily see the link between what your company offers and what they need. This is obvious in theory, but in reality, it’s much tougher because it requires us to walk in their shoes and understand their specific needs. We invest plenty of time communicating messages in supply-side language and not nearly enough time framing our messages in buy-side language or in syncing our messages with buyer values, goals and priorities.

2. **Receptivity.** It takes time, but it’s vital to learn which communications media, vehicles and forums work best with your target audience (publication advertising, website, social media, trade show, YouTube, etc.). Knowing the media your market relies on for information enables you to reach buyers at a time when, or at a place where, they’re most receptive to hearing what your company has to say.
3. **Recognition.** Create a clear, compelling identity and message which enable the audience to separate your company or brand from competitors along meaningful dimensions (e.g., creates quantified savings, measurably improves performance). The audience remembers and recognizes your company’s name—and what it stands for.

4. **Response.** Make it easy for the audience to respond to your call-to-action and get in touch with your company. Don't waste dollars on things that don't work. Whatever the medium, vehicle or point of contact, know what works best to generate optimum response from a particular group.

5. **Relationships.** If buyers don't know your company, they can't buy what your company makes. And if buyers don't trust your company, they *won't buy* what it makes. Your company needs to communicate with constituent groups on an ongoing basis, sustaining and building relationships with key customers, editors, analysts, employees and other stakeholders to pave the way for its next transaction with the individuals who make up those groups.

These five rules can ensure the strategic focus of your marketing communications, breathing life into every project and enabling you to squeeze every dollar's worth of value out of your company's marketing budget.