

**OUTSTANDING MARKETING STARTS WITH
KNOWING HOW YOU STAND OUT. SO HERE'S...**

How to Look at Your Business (and See the Strengths Others See)

In the eyes of your most loyal and satisfied customers, your business stands out like A Red Penguin in a monotone colony of conformity. Those customers head your way instinctively, delighted to have an easy buying decision.

But what draws them in so naturally? Is it a really a simple, classic “brand,” built on one “unique selling proposition”? Something that one-dimensional? That open-and-shut?

Or is it a multi-faceted mix of attributes that different people see in different ways, but many find reason to favor?

AT A RED PENGUIN, WE SEE CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS AS HAVING MANY DIMENSIONS

Just think of internet comments and conversations. Different people show their appreciation of the same thing for different reasons. There are common threads, but complex patterns.

So when we show your Red Penguin Personality to your target markets, you'll show an appealing mix of positive attributes. In the way you position your offerings. Your voice. Your style. Your priorities. Your perspectives. **You don't only have one side to what makes you a natural favorite.**

YOU'LL SEE SOME OF THE WAYS YOU NATURALLY STAND APART...

...in the next six pages. Read on to get more in touch with what makes your organization “a red penguin”—a stand-out option, on sight—in others' eyes.



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STEP ONE: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS YOUR PROSPECTS ARE ASKING

You might think that every new prospect your business has must have dozens of questions about your business. But is that correct? When you, yourself, go looking to make a purchase or consider a new supplier, what do *you* really look to find out?

Are these some of the basics?

1. Can they help me?
2. How can they help me?
3. How did I hear about them?
4. What do I do next, if I'm interested?

If, as you consider your purchasing options, one stands out, is it because that company made clever, catchy statements? Or because they answered these basic questions clearly and well, and made your choice easy?

At A Red Penguin, our focus will be on making your customers' buying decisions as clear and easy as possible. So we will put ourselves in your shoes, endlessly, and ask:

1. Who do we help?
2. How do we help them?
3. How are we telling them we can help them?
4. What should they do once they know?

When it comes to marketing, most small businesses emulate what they feel most of their competition is doing, because it feels safest. By making impressions that keep them looking like a typical competitor, they position themselves to be in the running, and not left out.

That reality gives some small businesses a very big opportunity. It makes it possible for a small company *that really wants to grow and lead* to step forward and say exactly what its best prospects are hoping to hear.

They can step up and say, *“We are different in specific ways (that some of you highly value), and we know it, claim it, and value it ourselves.”*

Our clients stand out, naturally and sensibly, by making clear: We have the answers *you're hoping to hear*, and we are the solution *you're looking to find*.

STEP TWO: SEE THE PICTURE YOUR ORGANIZATION IS PAINTING

It's not uncommon to think that a "brand" is simply some creative combination of a logo, tagline and sales message that gives an organization an identity. Something, in fact, sort of arbitrary that an artist dreams up to attach to your company.

After all, there are a lot of lightweight slogans out there that don't seem to say a thing.

But consider the strongest brands you know: Volvo stands for safety. Cadillac for luxury. Staples for selection. Whole Foods for, frankly, healthier groceries.

Think it over carefully and you may come to see that the true brand of any organization exists long before a marketing department shows up to link words and images to it. The true brand of an organization is simply the image that others see when they look its way and pay attention over time.

Think of it as an oil painting, where every action made by a member of the organization is a brush stroke on a canvas, and new actions cover over old, so the image is always a work in progress.

Your most loyal customers find your image quite attractive, but it may take *you* a bit of effort and practice to learn to *see your company* through *their* eyes.

You might say your organization is committed to customer service. Your customers don't actually say *that*, though. They tell colleagues about the day you got a delivery to them in the middle of a record-setting snowstorm, or the time you gently guided them through a time of crisis while addressing all their concerns, or how you anticipate needs and give them timely "heads-up" calls to help head off potential trouble.

Your brand is the picture that's created by every dab of paint that your organization's personnel put on the canvas. Every action is a brushstroke, creating an image over time. And the more you can help us to see what your happiest customers see in you, the more clearly we'll be able to present that same image of your organization to thousands of others...

...many of whom would *love* to be *as happy with any service or supplier* as your best customers *are with you*.

STEP THREE: LOOK FAR BEYOND "WHAT MOST PEOPLE WOULD DO"

In Michael E. Gerber's seminal book, *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, he maintains that most people who start and run small businesses are not entrepreneurial by nature. And by that he means:

They do not launch their businesses *driven by a passion that will:*

Drive them to develop the plans and systems that will:

Build and direct a team that will:

Carry out the processes that will:

Produce exceptional team success over time.

Few fired-up founders are driven by dreams of organizing, developing and delegating. So when they come face-to-face with the need to create and maintain the team that will create and maintain the dream, many founders just want to know "what most people do" in the same situation...so they can *safely and routinely do that*.

The downside, though, to doing what most do—given that your most promising prospects will most value outstanding offerings—is that it *will only get you what most get*.

If you're standing shoulder to shoulder with a line of competitors, and look to the left and right to discern the best course of action, and copy what you see, chances are very good that you will still be shoulder-to-shoulder with the same competitors once you have all done what you all saw as best.

If a business wants to end up way out in front of the competitors who currently stand in line to the left and right, it must form its strategies by asking, "What would an uncommon company do?"

"What would a market leader do?"

"What would a company that's going to end up standing out, in terms of *results*, do?"

Well, it would do something that makes it stand out in terms of *approach*. Something unexpected.

We at A Red Penguin, when developing the brand your team will be known by, will not be doing what your competitors do, and what they expect you to do. We will be taking a different path to a more distinctive place.

Companies that don't make an intentional effort to stand apart end up creating very generic marketing messages, including websites and other materials, that simply describe the services of a typical, generic company of their type.

So then, any organization that does "what most people would do" to build its market presence will carry out a costly, predictable process of *blending into the crowd*.

STEP FOUR: PLOT CRESTS & DIPS. AND PLACE YOUR CHIPS.

As you've read to this point, you've been encouraged to:

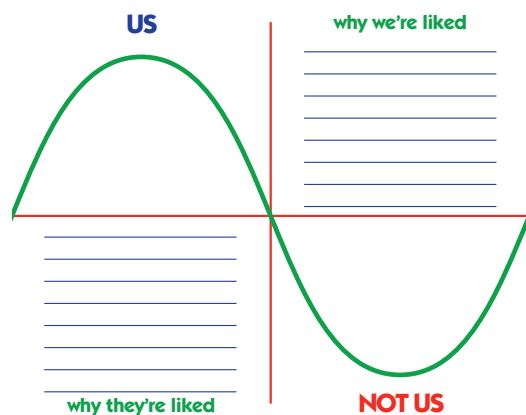
- Think a bit about whom you help, and how.
- Step back to examine the public image of your company, and what your happiest customers like most about it.
- Appreciate that to get different results than your competition, you have to take fundamentally different approaches.

So here, now, are two key *Red Penguin Principles* that these first three steps have prepared you to put to work.

PLOTTING YOUR CRESTS AND DIPS IN MARKET POSITIONING

Your happiest customers value you for specific reasons. Surge your marketing messages in their direction and you will, naturally and unavoidably, create a trough in another area of your market. And this is a good thing.

Picture a graph with “luxury” written on the left and “economy” on the right. Now draw a single wave to suggest the preferences/values of Mercedes Benz buyers. You'll have a peak to the left and a dip to the right...and an ultra-clear representation of whom you should be talking to and what they'll most want to hear from you.



Most small businesses try their best to be all things to all people. Their line, then, looks flat, left to right, like a heart monitor with no beat. In trying to make sure no one sees anything lacking in any of their offerings, such business owners create a graph in which nothing stands out at all. Worse yet, to their prospects, their flat line appears to be one of many just like it, *stacked on top of the equally indistinct lines of their competitors*.

When a small business owner complains that “our prospects can’t tell us apart from our competition,” it’s because their own flat line is identical to all the others. The good news is, any effort at all to push toward one audience—and away from another—will immediately have better prospects seeing the difference.

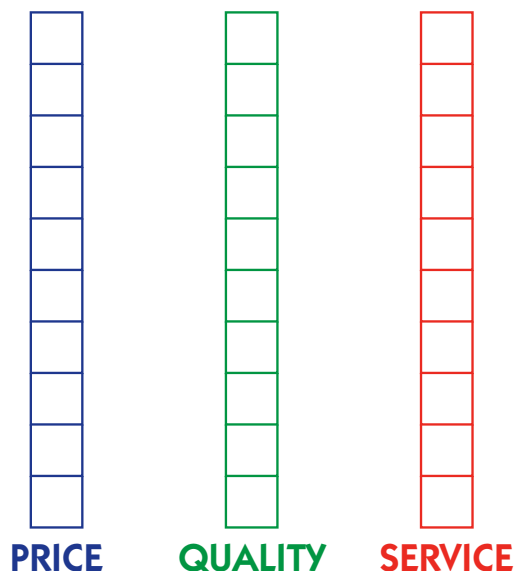
Think of when you’re a customer: When you want quality, you look to the companies that reach out to you offering quality. When you want value, you look to those who reach out to offer value. And when you have to work too hard to see what is being offered, you move on quickly in search of more obvious advantages.

PLACING YOUR CHIPS IN DOWN-TO-BUSINESS BRANDING

Chances are, you've heard of the old business adage: "Service. Quality. Value. Pick any two." And chances are, you've run into a business owner convinced that his company offers a clear abundance of all three.

The problem with that belief is that another company can always offer better service and quality by charging more, or greater economy by spending less on quality or service, so a business owner intent on offering all three in equal amounts is bent on compromising in all three areas.

To see this clearly, imagine a three-column chart, with the columns labeled "Price," "Quality" and "Service."



Each column has enough space to hold 10 poker chips, giving you 30 total spaces to fill.

The challenge is, *you only get 15 poker chips to place...* and how you place those chips will determine which potential customers look your way and are most strongly attracted.

Try to provide all three assets in equal amounts, and you'll find that each column is 50% filled. That will have shoppers seeing an extremely average company... difficult to distinguish from *every other company* that's taking that same "all things to all people" approach.

In comparison, a business owner who truly wants his business to stand out in *some ways* will now see the problem in trying to have it stand out in *every way*: More energy and attention put toward one segment of your market spectrum results in less put toward another. More chips placed in any one column—no matter its focus—leave fewer chips to fill another.

And trying to put the focus everywhere at once—to appeal to *everyone at once*—will always result in equal columns, half-filled, and a definitively "average" impression.

**BECOMING KNOWN FOR YOUR STRONG POINTS WILL HAPPEN NATURALLY.
YOU CAN EMBRACE IT OR RESIST IT, BUT YOU CANNOT AVOID IT.**

It's easy to understand why the flat-line, go-for-average approach is embraced by so many small business people, especially early in a company's history:

- It enables a company to attempt to meet *any and all* of its prospects' needs, so the company never needs to turn down any opportunity and can *get busy faster*.
- It turns over the responsibility for defining the character of the company *to its customers*, who will make clear *what they need and value most over time*.
- It keeps the company moving with the pack early on, feeling safe and giving it lots of similar examples to follow as it develops basic business survival skills.

However, once any organization has some history behind it, its most satisfied and loyal customers will have developed very clear perceptions of the needs the company is meeting, the picture it's painting, and its "Crests And Dips" and "Placed Chips."

Those natural-best-fit customers will come back again and again, *naturally*. And some business leaders, seeing that, will want to better understand why...*also quite naturally*.

Perhaps they sense that knowing their company's greatest promise starts with appreciating its strongest natural points of appeal.

A company that learns to know and show its greatest strengths, as they are seen by its most satisfied customers, will know something very valuable indeed.

It will know how to always be pulling more of its ideal prospects its way...by simply *being, and showing itself at, its most valued best*.

**AT A RED PENGUIN, WE PROMOTE YOUR
BUSINESS'S NATURAL PATH TO SUCCESS.**

***Call A Red Penguin today at 410-740-9381
or email jverba@aredpenguin.com.***