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# What ails marketing? Tactification, communification and digitisation

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## Tactification

I made up this word so my apologies for its clumsiness, but its the only way to capture the current obsession with the tactical elements of marketing at the expense of the other deeper marketing activities that precede and predicate them.

There are three phases to all marketing work. First, we diagnose the situation of the brand via consumer research and understand just what is going on. Second, we use that diagnosis to build a clear and simple marketing strategy. Finally, with that strategy in place we select the appropriate tactics to deliver the strategy and win the day.



There is no polite way to say this, but most big brands are being run without any proper marketing strategy. Instead, those in charge delight in the latest gimmicks and tactics yet remain unable to articulate their target segments beyond the inane and entirely ridiculous concept of millennials while the positioning for their brands are little more than random strap lines. Ask for objectives and a dribble of purpose statements and brand love stands in for proper measurable goals. The focus on digital and the latest hot technology has resulted in all too many Australian companies putting the tactical cart in front of the strategic horse.

Talk to agencies about the quality of the briefs they currently receive from clients and you will get the kind of hard stare usually reserved from the most outrageous agency gossip. Time after time advertising agencies are being instructed on what tactical dimensions a big brand wants to include, but are given little if any strategic input on what those brands are trying to achieve.

Strategy is a very complicated thing to work out but should be a very simple thing to eventually explain. In our world of marketing it comes down to being able three basic questions, and answer them long before we have started spending money on VR headsets and the latest Facebook ads:

Who am I targeting?

What is my position to that target?

What are my strategic objectives for that target market?

My current estimate is that around 20% of brands could adequately or semi-adequately pass this test and the rest have not the faintest clue how to even approach these questions.

### **Communification**

This is another clumsy word I made up. It is meant to describe the fact that not only are marketers adept at just tactics at the expense of diagnosis and strategy they only focus on one small, relatively unimportant sub-set of marketing tactics communications for all their efforts.

I wont get into the eternal debate about how many Ps you should divide your tactics into. Suffice to say most modern marketers are convinced the four or seven or 10 Ps are dead.

However you decide to slice your tactical pie there is no doubt that most marketers of the last decade are inherently obsessed with the promotional P and have virtually nothing to say about pricing or distribution. This is insane because although it is unfair to play favourites if you really had to kill one of your four puppies the promotional one is clearly the least essential one in the mix. Give me a great product, sold through omnichannel in the right way at the optimum price and its going to be ok. Sure, a great integrated communication plan will make things sell faster and further but if you want to choose the one tactic that we could live without its the one marketers spend most of their time obsessing about.

At that next marketing conference take a long hard look at the agenda. Now count the sessions focusing on some form of marketing communication versus the sessions on all the other topics? See what I mean. I see marketing as three equal challenges of diagnosis, strategy and tactics. I see communications as one quarter (at most) of the tactical challenge. That means it should be about 8% of the stuff we talk about in marketing? Why is it more than 80%?

### **Digitisation**

Of course, when I say communications...

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