

**MARKETING = CUSTOMERS
HEART +**

How to build
your small business
growth strategy

JUDY & ERIKS CELMINS

Marketing is the heart of Business.
Customers are the heart of Marketing.
Trust is the heart of Customers.

Foreword

As we move through the shock, fracture, and uncertainty of the global COVID-19 pandemic, many business mindsets are deep in recovery. However, how do you recover in the new world of disruption?

Marketing = Customers + Heart lays out the answers and defines the foundations of success today, with marketing techniques on how to not only recover but thrive in the 'new normal'.

I first worked closely with Eriks and Judy to build the highly successful National Nova Radio Network in Australia. Nova was the first FM station to launch in the lucrative Sydney market for 20 years. Conventional wisdom and radio truisms of the time dictated the format and direction. Or at least, that is what the competitors thought!

Through careful research and an open mind, Eriks and Judy spotlighted potential audiences and customers. The focus was on what the customer wanted and needed, what they loved and did not, and the possibilities rather than the competitors and marketplace norms.

By looking at the broader market outside of radio and media, we were able to identify critical foundations for a new and 'different' brand through the eyes of potential customers.

However, research and science often do not provide all the answers. At this juncture, 'art and creativity' come in and this is where Eriks and Judy excel. Their expertise diverges from most strategic research experts. They are innovators and problem solvers. Their unique mix of art and science, EQ and IQ, and a sixth sense for people is at the heart of their success, and what makes this book so compelling.

Devising a successful strategy is one thing; executing it brilliantly is another. In the following pages, you will learn the 'secret sauce' recipes that have seen Eriks and Judy at the top of their game for years, and perhaps more relevant now than ever.

Eriks and Judy are the Yin and Yang of marketing, a perfect creative combination of strategy and execution. They are big picture thinkers who challenge the status quo. Their focus on consumer insights has helped drive incredibly successful outcomes for many media clients and businesses globally.

There are many marketing books; however, only a few have the power to make a real difference in your professional and personal life immediately and into the future.

Marketing = Customers + Heart details cornerstone techniques through seven stages, with the clever use of QR codes linking to real-life anecdotes and stories.

Learn to understand, engage, and unlock the psychographics and behaviours of your customers – the bedrock for any successful business – to create a winning strategy.

“You cannot sell a secret”, and through modern marketing, this book will show you how to break out of your comfort zones and not just recover, but become a thriveable business.

Dean Buchanan – Founder DRB Entertainment

7 Stages to a ThriveableBiz[®]



CHAPTER 2

Lay the Foundation



FROM JUDY

- + The 3 Cs Model
- + Customers call the shots
- + Why do people 'hire' you?
- + Dig deeper for the need
- + Where's the market?
- + Is planning only for investors?
- + The trouble with traditional business plans
- + A case story of failure and redemption
- + Why should I buy from you?
- + Slash your repair bills

The 3 Cs Model

We all need simple ways to stay on track when our brains are overloaded! One popular concept is the 3 Cs Model.* I find this a simple way to re-focus on what's important.

Our version is **C**ustomers, **C**apability, **C**ompetition. Use it to filter your marketing activities on stretched resources. If a budget line doesn't address one of the Cs, it's probably money wasted.

For example, *differentiation* is a cornerstone of any strategy (or should be!). But you can't go to market and differentiate on what

- + Your customers don't want.
- + You can't deliver.
- + Your competitor dominates.

Customers call the shots

Shifting from operations to customer focus is more than just tinkering with a few words on a mission statement. It involves a significant re-gearing of your mindset and culture, and the

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3Cs_model

way you approach your business plan compared to traditional methods.

I cover more in-depth aspects of mindset in Stage 2. But right now, we're building the marketing foundation of your business with customers, not your accountant, advisor, stakeholders, etc., calling the shots.

Let's start with the real reasons customers buy *anything*, not just from you. Without these, your marketing will misfire and keep you stuck in the pack with your competitors.

Why do people 'hire' you?

You may be a business owner or manager, but you are always for hire to do a job.

This is where we ended Chapter 1 – the principle behind the *Jobs to be Done* framework for innovation. We love it as a handy way to describe why people purchase a product, which is not always what you think!

A famous example about milkshakes comes from Clayton M. Christensen. He was asked by a fast-food chain to find out how to sell more milkshakes. Previous attempts had failed until he framed the question as, "What 'job' arises in people's lives that causes them to 'hire' a milkshake?"

This was the breakthrough. Clayton identified a new growth opportunity in long commute drivers who wanted a thicker shake to last the journey and conveniently manage in the car.*

Dig deeper for the need

Everything we do or buy meets a below-the-surface need that's not always obvious.

I love gardening – that's my happy place. But plant nurseries can give me mixed emotions. If they don't know or can't deliver what I want, then the experience can be frustrating.

If I buy a pair of secateurs, it's not just about their practical purpose. It's what they will do for my garden. Which leads to the question, what's my deeper desire? What does a new plant or a tool fulfil in me?

The answer is a sense of pride in my garden. It makes me smile when I watch a flower emerge from nothing – watching the birds and the bees (yes, the real ones) feeding and building nests.

It's a sense of community – I get to talk to others about the garden and share stories. I can pick fresh food, and so on.

* Clayton M. Christensen, *Competing Against Luck*, Harper Business, 2016

These are insights a nursery could use for more engaging marketing beyond the half-price sale.

The point is, very few purchases we make are for purely rational reasons. And when you understand what motivates your customers deep down, when you know what they're 'hiring' your product for, you can excite them. That's marketing at its best.

Where's the market?

Once you have the starting point of a customer need, there's more homework to be done on the scope and location of the problem you're solving for them. Location is not just physical for a bricks and mortar business or your reach online, but where you fit inside your competitor set.

When I launched the Four Legged Friends pet store in Sydney's Neutral Bay some 30 years ago, the first thing I did was undertake market analysis.

This was before it was possible to search online for stats, so I accessed census data to review the area where I wanted to open. I wanted as much information as I could find on who my potential customers would be. That research drove my entire business strategy. It influenced the products I stocked and even the colour scheme I selected for the store.

The data told me the demographic make-up of my target, their housing types, the number of people in the average household and where they worked.

From that, I painted a picture of their lifestyle and how a pet would fit into it. Marketing was an integral part of the initial planning, and it formulated my business pillars, the reason for being. And when it came to our expansion planning, I was looking for areas with similar profiles.

That's just the same as what McDonald's and, in fact, most larger businesses do when they open a new outlet. They want to know if there are enough potential customers within the competitor mix to succeed.

Yet many small business owners with an idea will grab a location and do little more than pray that people buy from them.

It doesn't matter if your business sells to customers or other companies, physically or online. You must understand *where you sit in the market*.

There's a link on the QR code landing page for this stage to 'Desk Research', with a selection of links to start your investigation.

Is planning only for investors?

The owner of an accounting firm once told me he doesn't advise his clients to do any financial forecasting, budgeting, or planning.

That is a survey of one, so I'm hoping that's a minority opinion! But it makes sense. I find accountants generally only seem interested in my bottom line, where the money is going and how it is coming in.

Then I chatted to a financial advisor for hire and a couple of business consultants. They all said the most significant problem they face with their clients was a *lack of planning*. When they ask a business owner where they expect to be in 12 months, they reply with a figure.

The next question is, "How do you intend to reach that figure?" The predominant answer is an increase in sales targets and a price rise to cover inflation.

So basically, they'll charge more for the same offering, and put the heat on their sales team to meet their budgets. Which, to me, doesn't seem at all customer- and market-focused, and potentially misses new opportunities.

The trouble with traditional business plans

It's common to work through a business plan template and think you've covered all the potential issues. But I've long believed there are problems with the standard templates.

They encourage you to focus on operational aspects first, then add your marketing strategy. Very few people understand how to do that and end up skimming over the marketing component.

This goes back to my point in Chapter 1 about marketing not being just about advertising and sales. The marketing box to fill out is ambiguous in its meaning and shunted all around the business plan chart, depending on the interpretation. *Everything You Do Is Marketing!*

A case story of failure and redemption

One of my recent start-up mentees reinforced this confusion and its harmful consequences.

She came to me after completing a business training course and developing a business plan. As an afterthought, she asked me to help her with marketing – which was more like an advertising strategy. I'll come back to my frustration with the tangle between the two in a moment. Anyway, I made it clear, in a nice way, that her business plan was nowhere near finished. To her credit, she took it all on board.

By the time we finished, her target audience was turned upside down. There was no other choice. She was on the fast track to failure based on her original business plan. There just wasn't a big enough audience for her to survive, let alone grow. But rather than hit a dead-end, together we expanded her opportunities and completely changed her marketing and, therefore, her business strategy.

Countless times I've seen this failure to think and plan with marketing at the centre. The sad reality is that it's often discovered too late.

Why should I buy from you?

Here's a light-hearted view of advertising clichés through the eyes of a fictitious customer.

You're the best ... really?

You're a family business ... how does that help me?

You're the cheapest ... you're not going to be in business very long.

You've been around a long time ... so what!

You've got the best hairdressers in town ... OK.

I fell for that last one, and ended up with the worst haircut ever! So after a drink, I grabbed my dog's grooming scissors for a play and a laugh. Later on, in Stage 7, *The Magical Power of Stories*, we reveal what's better than best.

Just because you've opened your doors, it's not enough reason for customers to try you. Habits are hard to break because our primal brains hate using energy on change. So your customers need a compelling emotional motivator to do something different. The most potent influence will be a job they need doing to improve their lives in some way.

The good news. Just look around a shopping strip, online retailer, or service provider in any sector. You'll see how easy it would be to stand out by just offering something different. *There is so much wallpaper out there in small business land.*

Slash your repair bills

If your foundation isn't strong enough, it doesn't matter what you build on top of it. You'll always be doing repairs to keep it standing against the strong winds of change coming in the next chapter.

You end up spending most of your time in a panicked, stressed state, chasing sales just to keep afloat – not a nice place to be.

How can you start a new business, pivot your existing business, or go to market with a new product or service if you don't know *Who* it's for and *How* it meets their needs?

CHAPTER 2

Action Points

- + What 'job' do people 'hire your milkshake' for?
- + Take one of your advertising pitch-lines and ask, "So what?" Be annoying and keep asking until the answer relates to a customer 'job'.
- + Ask a customer, "When your problem keeps you awake at night, what do you Google to find the answers?"

Break Out, Break Through

We hope you've enjoyed this small taste of **The 7 Stages of Customers + Heart**.

It's the map through the **Thriveable Pathway**© based on our decades of learning from our own small businesses and helping countless others.

Marketing = Customers + Heart is a living book. At each stage you'll find a QR Code, that will take you to a landing page which we constantly update with free resources.

Next steps to a Thriveable Business

To quote one of our reviewers, Wade Kingsley, Founder of The Ideas Business, "What I love the most about **Marketing = Customers + Heart** is how practical the steps are! So many Marketing books are aimed at making the author famous, and not to help you get sales. If you follow the advice in here from Judy and Eriks, you'll find it so much easier to find your next customer. And your next. And your next."

Get your copy today, visit <https://thriveablebiz.com/marketing-customersheart-small-business-growth-strategy/>

You can also fast-track to a **Power Chat** by emailing judy@thriveablebiz.com

Thanks for reading!

All the best for your future success.



Judy & Eriks

About the Authors

Together **Judy & Eriks** are a dynamic force, driven to be the best and help others along that path. When they first met in radio over 30 years ago, it was like two minds coming together from different directions. As a top sales representative, Judy brought her restless energy and commitment to solving client problems with effective advertising campaigns. Eriks, the Content Director, knew how to research audience tastes and entertain people with engaging shows.

They are a focused, creative combination of marketing strategy and execution, constantly challenging assumptions and bouncing ideas around to make life better for *their* clients – and their customers.

