

Schmuck-Based Marketing

by Michael Katz

When I was growing up, my dad was obsessed with the condition of our front lawn.

I didn't understand it then, but I do now. **There's something oddly satisfying about planting seeds and watching them grow.**

Early spring is the best time for grass.

The sun's out but not too hot. It rains fairly regularly. The weeds have yet to take over. As my dad would say, **"Any schmuck can grow grass in the spring."**

Can you do it in the summer? Yes. But it's waaaaaay harder.

In the world of client acquisition, there's an analog to the grass-growing magic of spring. It's called demand.

Here's what I mean...

I love marketing. Creating interesting content; staying in touch with my contacts; positioning myself and/or my clients in a way that makes us the clear and obvious choice to prospects.

Does it work? You bet.

But what I've come to realize is that **the most important element in successful marketing** – the thing that makes the biggest difference regarding whether or not the phone rings – isn't marketing at all.

It's need.

If people already need what you're selling (and they're aware of the need), marketing is pretty straightforward and generally successful.

If, on the other hand, whatever you're offering doesn't line up with a problem they are currently experiencing, you've got a lot of work to do.

First you have to convince them that they have a problem at all. And that it's worth fixing. And that they can't fix it themselves.

Only then do things like awareness, likeability, trust, pricing, packaging and all the other marketing nitty-gritties come into play.

It's a lot easier if they're already in search of a solution.

Think about it. **Have you ever seen the fire department do any advertising?** Me neither.

Why would they? When your house is on fire – when you have a big problem that needs immediate attention – you don't hesitate.

When it's *not* on fire, on the other hand, Smokey the Bear himself couldn't convince you to pick up the phone, regardless of any special promotion, one-time offer or whatever.

No demand, no response.

Here's the bottom line. Step number one in marketing your business is *not* figuring out how to promote it.

Rather, it's about figuring out where pain already exists and positioning yourself and your services as somebody who can remove it.

Can you manufacture demand by convincing people that they need whatever it is you're selling?

Sure. You can plant seed in the middle of July too.

Just remember, any schmuck can grow grass in the spring.

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