



# CATEGORIES THAT ALL MARKETING FALLS UNDER

**WHEN TALKING ABOUT MARKETING**, there are often countless, nearly pointless categories that are created, such as *internet marketing*, *active marketing*, *passive marketing*, *relational marketing*, and *affiliation marketing*, just to name a few. While these models do a great job explaining what they are doing, they lack the “how-to” and a holistic look at how a company should be addressing the market. They are the subcategories in an overarching marketing strategy. Should every company do Internet marketing? Yes, but what is involved with that? And more importantly, how do I ensure that my (fill in the blank) marketing is catching the attention of customers that are ready to buy now, customers ready to buy in 6 months, and retaining customers? There is a lot involved in developing a marketing strategy, and in order to be successful in that strategy, there must be three elements present in all the various marketing subcategories.

The first step in understanding the 3 essential elements involved in marketing is understanding that a company is doing much more than selling a product or service. A company is a living, breathing, and growing entity. Every time a customer communicates or buys from a company they are getting much more than what they bought. Let's take a shoe store for example:

*Susan walks into the Dan's Shoe Store wearing sandals. She is immediately greeted warmly by an old peddler who is polishing a shoe. He walks over to the size 9s and pulls down two different shoes for her to try on, and says, “This pair will provide arch support so if you jog a lot your feet will be less sore at the end of a run, but this other pair is a little skinnier so that your foot will slide around less. And if you buy both I'll give you the second one for 50% off.” He then pulls out ankle socks and says, “Which would you like to try on first?”*

Through this simple interaction, 3 different categories of marketing occurred; the first category is *informational/traditional marketing*. The shoe store made it clear that they sell shoes. They also presented one of the services they provide — shoe polishing. This information is extremely important for a customer to know to have them even set foot in the store. If Dan's Shoe Store was called *The Next Step Athletics* or *Sleek Shoes*, the information given might not attract her. She was looking for a generic shoe store to get a generic shoe. Informational marketing provides the answer to the “What?” question a customer may have. “What do you sell (both products and services)?” “What discounts are there?” “What else can I come to you for? What hours do you work?” “What experience/certificates do you have?” All of this information gives a customer enough information to feel comfortable accessing if a business is actually a business, and therefore generally fair and competent. Because of informational marketing, Susan should enter the store in light of the products and services offered, their hours, and the sale/special days. Informational marketing only truly attracts people ready to buy now.

The second category of marketing is *community & environment marketing*. This marketing's top focus is on a community experience and incorporating user-generated content. With Dan's Shoe Store, there are only a few spots of community marketing. The first one was the design of the store itself. Though the example only mentioned an old peddler polishing a shoe likely the picture of the store created matched that feel, with the rich smell of leather and shoe polish, old fashioned wooden shelves and of course plenty of shoe horns. A well-established, welcoming environment immediately builds customer rapport and makes the product *and the process* enjoyable. Without this important element there is a cold callous feeling of dealing with a stranger. Being amiable is part of the marketing process. The socks (and shoe horns) are another way the community experience is built. Rather than simply shoes and chairs to sit in while trying them, the shoe store has gone above and beyond the expected, making the customer feel at ease while using and testing out the product. They get a sense that they are cared for and not being pressured to buy. This allows for a deeper and friendlier interaction. User-generated content was not shown in the example, but it would've helped the business. Imagine if in the front window display next to a few prime examples of well-made shoes, was a museum of the wonkiest customer shoe designs, where customers drew/painted/added sculptures atop their various shoes. Some people might come in just to look at the display and then leave, but others would thrive and because of this display they would willingly want to have the store become part of their identity. Community & environment marketing answers the “Why?” question a customer may have. “Why do I come to this store rather than another store of the same type?” “Why do I want to support this store?” “Why do I identify with this store or product?” Because of community marketing Susan should want to stay at the store and be involved or identified by their product. Community marketing mainly retains people that have already bought and enjoyed.

# 3 CATEGORIES THAT ALL MARKETING FALLS UNDER



The third category of marketing is *content/educational marketing*. This marketing's emphasis is on being the expert in the field, and thereby building credibility with the customer. This is demonstrated in the shoe store example in the man's dialogue. He knew what size shoe she was and he also explained advantages and disadvantages of different shoes types. Rather than the customer feeling they have to navigate the buying and knowledge process themselves they are free to scrutinize products or services and even question issues they are currently having with those items from the competitor's. Being an expert is the main effect of content marketing, allowing one to tell the world what should be expected in their field and the best product package. With this power people will come to Dan's Shoe Store because of the valuable information consistently supplied there and regardless of the price. A way that Dan's Shoe Store could've taken content marketing a step further would be by having a simple card at the register or tag on all their leather shoes stating the proper method to polish a shoe. This makes the customer feel empowered while incidentally encouraging them to make further purchases. Even if the company did not sell shoe polish, the customer would gain confidence in Dan's Shoe Store because of this education and be more likely to refer a friend, ask them to polish their shoes, or return to the store for future purchases. Not everyone will buy shoe polish, but everyone will appreciate knowing how to polish a shoe. Content marketing rightly builds customer confidence because they no longer have to make the decision alone, able to rely on actual facts provided by an expert. Content marketing answers the "*How?*" question a customer might have. "How do I best utilize this product?" "How do I compare this product with other similar products?" "How can I avoid costs?" "How am I not understanding this product?" Because of content marketing customers should feel they are not being sold to but rather being taught and this teaching is valuable enough to reassure their purchase. Content marketing both attracts people that are thinking about buying and retains people that have already bought.

These 3 categories of marketing are vast and do have some overlap, but when used cohesively, a wide range of people will be attracted on the buying cycle and companies can retain customers that may have explored other stores of the same type. When used together, all three questions a customer might have about a business are answered, the "*what?*", "*why?*" and "*how?*". What do you do? Why do I care? How can I use you or the information your company has? When one of these is not answered it leaves the customer wondering if the grass is greener on the other side, rather than them knowing for sure that the company sells what it sells, because it loves to, and knows how to help its customers.

Not everyone will buy from a single company regardless of marketing strategies, but building a complete marketing profile by utilizing elements from these 3 categories allows companies to complete a professional appearance.

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