Putting Your Business on The Map

Topic

Bridging the gap between marketing strategies and tactics.

Core Issue

What tools can marketers use to clearly chart their marketing plans, guide tactical investments, and measure results?

Touchpoints Are...

The physical assets every company uses to attract, engage and support the customer relationship.

When viewed as an integrated marketing system, Touchpoints are a powerful indicator of brand positioning and performance.

The Touchpoint Map™

Charting a company's marketing assets provides the perspective you need to connect strategies and tactics and create a consistently powerful brand

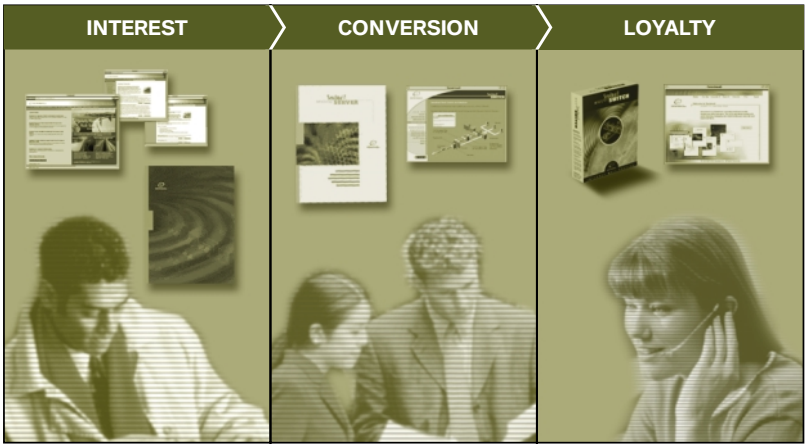
Most businesses today are engaged in passionate and informed discussions about strategic marketing, branding and eBusiness. But when it comes to deployment, the same companies struggle daily with weak positioning, inconsistent branding, unfocused technology investments, and internal conflicts over resources and direction. Without a link between marketing strategies and tactics, many companies are sailing without direction in the most turbulent economic waters seen in a decade.

The most effective tool for connecting strategies and tactics is one you rely on every day to find your way through uncharted territory--a map. A Touchpoint Map charts the customer environment created by a company's most critical marketing assets, providing the viewpoint strategists need not only to plan, but to monitor progress.

The Touchpoint Marketing Model™

The biggest challenge marketers face today is not a lack of strategic and tactical options, it's the lack of a vantage point from which to view those options and predict their effect. If you could see your marketing efforts the way you view a chessboard, the connection between strategy and tactics would become clear.

- Is your marketing balanced to support customer acquisition and retention?
- Do you know where the balancing point should be for your business model?
- Can you predict the impact of a tactical plan on your marketing objectives?



The concept behind Cymbic's Touchpoint Marketing Model is simple: the environment a company creates for their customers can be viewed in the collection of

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Touchpoint Mapping

1. Plot your strategic marketing plan and compare against your current assets.

2. Seewhere your assets are arranged according to the customer life cycle and compare against your current marketing initiatives.

3. Discover the "hidden" touchpoints that should be brought into the marketing process.

4. Map the touchpoints your competitors are using to understand their marketing strategies and predict their next move.

individual touchpoints through which a business communicates with customers and stakeholders. By mapping all of a company's touchpoints according to their position in the customer life cycle, marketers gain a comprehensive view of the company's strategic and tactical efforts.

A complete Touchpoint Map provides marketers with the tools to understand their company's current situation, preview strategic options, guide tactical deployment, and ultimately measure results.

Simple Idea—Powerful Implications

The first effect of mapping your company's touchpoints is the ability to see clearly where your assets are arranged and, when mapped correctly, how the arrangement reflects—or fails to reflect—your marketing objectives.

In most B2B companies, for example, the lion's share of the marketing budget is spent in the first segment of the customer life cycle, while most of the customer experience is in the third segment. This imbalance reflects a marketing tradition shaped by retail, but which in many cases is not appropriate for B2B companies.

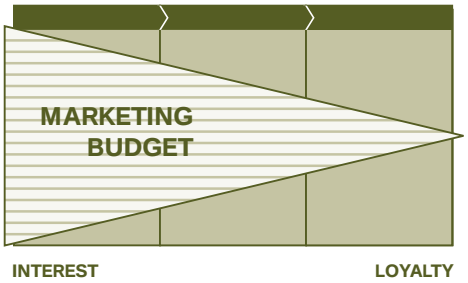
The second effect is that you begin to realize the tactical importance of minor touchpoints that are not typically considered within the marketing domain. The automated phone answering experience. The product User Interface. The monthly invoice.

The third effect of mapping your company's touchpoints, is that you see how strategy and tactics come together. What arrangement of touchpoints will reflect a company with a small but valuable customer base? Where should the investments be made to support that company's marketing strategy? How can a closer relationship be built with customers for the greatest impact.

The fourth, and perhaps most relevant effect in today's economy, is that you can use the map to apply MROI procedures. Once you have your marketing assets arrayed in front of you, you can track the impact of individual campaigns and investments on larger strategic objectives, as well as the combined effect of multiple initiatives.

Different Maps for Different Companies

Just like an ordinary map, the Touchpoint Map is adept at revealing many types of environments. Different kinds of businesses have different kinds of relationships with customers, which becomes clear in the pattern of assets a business uses to maintain those relationships.



Businesses that rely on a large customer

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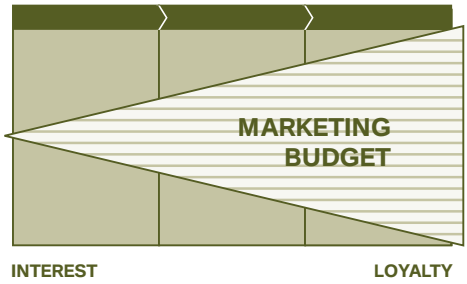
Touchpoint Analysis

1. Wire your Web site and other electronic tools to track touchpoint traffic.

2. Apply MROI procedures to track the impact of individual campaigns on general marketing objectives.

3. Track asset meta patterns against CRM data to uncover relationships between touchpoint arrays and customer lifetime value.

base, for example, typically need to spend a lot of resources attracting and engaging new prospects to keep the pipeline full. Successful businesses in this category, such as retail businesses, spend a lot of time and money on touchpoints that promote the brand and build awareness.



On the other hand, businesses that have a small customer base need to spend a lot more of their resources supporting and protecting the customers they have. Successful businesses in this category spend a lot of time and money on touchpoints that ensure customer support and loyalty.

Mapping for Marketing ROI

Many companies spend the bulk of their marketing resources attracting new customers, and neglect investments that might preserve customer loyalty. Among technology companies in particular, the customer life cycle often moves out of the domain of marketing once a lead becomes a sales prospect.

It's no secret that keeping a customer is cheaper than winning a new one. But the true impact becomes clear when you combine the Touchpoint Map with basic CRM techniques for comparing customer acquisition costs with customer lifetime value. Are your investments in touchpoints to support acquisition balanced with your investments to support retention? For most high-growth B2B companies the answer is no, though few companies realize it until they see it in black and white. For businesses that are already well aware of these metrics, the Touchpoint Map is useful in tracking ROI to find the optimum balance of acquisition and loyalty programs.

The Benefits of the Touchpoint Model

1. It is customer-centered

The Touchpoint Map catalogs every point of interaction with the customer. When your brand represents your business's relationship with customers, the Touchpoint Map is a powerful vantage point for maintaining that relationship.

2. It bridges the gap between strategy and tactics

Like a road map, the Touchpoint Map doesn't tell you where to go or what road to take—but is very useful in helping you figure out where you are and what paths will be most effective. Combined with Marketing ROI measures, the Touchpoint Map can help you track where you're reaching customers most effectively, where investments in tactical tools would reap the greatest rewards, and a host of other insights. The map can also be used to chart your competitors to gain a greater understanding of their strategies and tactics.

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For More Information
about builidng a Touchpoint Map for your business, please contact Cymbic.

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3. It creates a marketing view that encompasses the whole business

Many companies reduce marketing to "a department where creative promotion is done"—a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept of marketing. Marketing *is* business. The Touchpoint Map conveys the importance of a whole-business marketing mindset by tracking the customer relationship through every department with a direct connection to a customer, a partner, a supplier, an investor, and even an employee.

4. It assists in the integration of marketing and technology initiatives

Many companies today have sharp divisions between their marketing and technology departments, which dramatically undermines business performance. The Touchpoint Marketing Model unites marketing and technology teams, as well as other departments, by focusing on a common goal: supporting the customer experience.

5. It ensures brand consistency

Brand consistency is a primary factor in establishing trust and, by extension, customer loyalty. Nothing undermines credibility faster than a fragmented or inconsistent presentation. In many respects, a Touchpoint Map can be seen as an extension of a Corporate Standards Guide, ensuring a consistent brand experience across all points of contact.

6. It provides equal value and scalability from startups to public companies.

Whether a company's assets comprise a simple system of 10 or 20 touchpoints, or a complex architecture of thousands, the concept is the same. A map of the touchpoints reveals many layers of relationships—between individual touchpoints, between sub-systems of touchpoints and the whole system, between patterns of touchpoints and business performance. Every business can profit from this analysis, and any business can undertake the initial analysis quickly and cost-effectively.

About Cymbic

Founded in 1987, Cymbic (www.cymbic.com) is a San Francisco area-based brand marketing agency delivering the powerful tools technology businesses need to attract, engage and support their target audiences across multiple brand Touchpoints.

Cymbic bridges the gap between marketing and technology initiatives with a system of practical strategies and services for building and tracking brand performance with a measurable return on investment.

Cymbic provides integrated services and tools for Brand Development, Sales Support, Marketing Communications, Product Launches and eBusiness Deployment.

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