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Make It Happen

Thanks for hanging in there with me and for reading this far! When I speak to audiences and run seminars on the new rules of marketing and PR, this is the point at which many people are stimulated to get out there and make it happen. They want to start a blog right away, shoot a video to embed in their site, generate some news releases, or begin buyer persona research in preparation for writing a marketing and PR plan that will guide them to create a content-rich website. If that describes you, great!

But in the audiences of my seminars and speeches, there is always another group of people who tend to feel a bit overwhelmed. There is just too much information, they say, or too many new and unfamiliar ideas. If you are in this category, you might be thinking that the people profiled in the book were able to figure out things that are just too complex and time-consuming for you to tackle, especially given your already hectic schedule. Hey, we all have stuff on our plates, and for most of us, implementing the ideas in the book will represent an addition to our workload.

But here's one of the greatest things about the new rules of marketing and PR: You can implement these ideas in bits and pieces! In fact, I don't expect anybody to implement *all* the ideas here. I don't do *that* many of them myself (okay, I admitted it—don't tell). Yes, I have a blog, and it is very important to me. I'm on Twitter, and I create some original videos. But I don't have a podcast, and I'm not on MySpace. I just do what I can and what works for me. And so should you.

Unlike a linear, offline marketing campaign where you must take a methodical, step-by-step approach leading up to a big release day, the web is, well, a *web*. You can add to the web at any time because it is iterative, not linear. Think about the last print advertisement you or others in your organization did. Everything had to be perfect, requiring thorough proofreading, tons of approvals from your colleagues (or your spouse), lengthy consultation with a bunch of third parties such as advertising agencies and printers, and—above all—lots of money. Your neck was on the line if there was a screw-up, so you obsessed over the details.

Contrast that with a web content initiative that you can implement quickly, get people to check out live, and make changes to on the fly. It really is much less stressful to create an online program. If you create a web page that doesn't work for you, you can just delete it. You can't do that with a print ad or direct-mail campaign. So I would urge you to think about how you might *selectively* experiment with the ideas in these pages rather than fret about coordinating them all and trying to get everything right on the first go.

Many organizations I've worked with have found that an excellent approach is first to do some buyer persona research. By reading the publications that your buyers read, perhaps attending a webinar that they attend, reading a few of the blogs in the space, and maybe interviewing a few buyers, you can narrow down the book's large list of techniques to determine the most appropriate web-based marketing and PR initiatives for you and work on them first.

Others have found that the best way to get started is to add a few pages of targeted thought leadership content for an important buyer persona to an existing website (perhaps with links from the homepage). What's great about this approach is that you don't have to redesign your site; all you are doing is *adding* some valuable content to what you already have. That's easy, right?

Still another first step might be to read the blogs in your market and begin to comment on them in order to coax your blogging voice out of its shell. Once you feel comfortable, you can take the plunge by creating your own blog and Twitter feed. But the good news is that you don't need to show the world right away—you can password-protect your fledgling blog and share it with only a few colleagues at first. Then, with some feedback, you can tweak your approach and finally remove the password protection, and you're off. The important thing is to just get out there. Remember, on the web, you are what you publish.

Your Mind-Set

To make the new rules of marketing and PR part of your personal world, you may have to change your mind-set. You'll need to understand your buyers, rather than just talk about your products and services. You'll need to be aware of what's going on in the real-time news and on social networks. You'll need to create content and publish it on the web, and sometimes you'll need to do it urgently to be successful. On social networks, two-way communication is required, not just the typical broadcast approach that most marketers are used to. These habits and techniques do not come naturally to entrepreneurs, business owners, or marketing and PR professionals steeped in more traditional ways.

I've talked with people all over the world who are struggling to adapt to these new rules. The process often starts with your coming to understand just how severely conventional methods can handicap your business and your career. But since you've read this far in the book, you know that already. So let me first introduce you to a chief marketing officer (CMO) who has made the transition, and then share a few ideas for how you too can make the mind-set shift I'm describing. It will take some time, but I've seen thousands of people come to thrive in the always-on world of instant communication—and you will, too.

The Journey from a Traditional Marketing Executive to a Modern CMO

With an MBA from Wharton, a bunch of high-profile marketing gigs on his resume, and a bit of gray hair to show he's got experience, Brian Kardon is what people think of as a typical chief marketing officer. He's been there and done that. But he realized one day that everything he learned in school and from the early part of his career in the publishing business had become obsolete.

"I cared about arts and crafts," he says. "I cared about brochures and direct mail. I cared about the color on the website. And what's happened is the world has gone digital. It's gone social. It's gone mobile. And we have to learn a completely new language of conversion rates and pay per click and search engine optimization and authoritative inbound links. It's a whole new world."

Today Kardon is chief marketing officer at Lattice Engines, a company that provides big data analytics for sales, marketing, and business intelligence, as well as a platform for predictive analytics.

There was a moment that caused Kardon to realize he was turning into a marketing dinosaur and heading toward extinction. “Within my second month being at Eloqua, I read a book called *Inbound Marketing* and didn’t put it down,” Kardon says. “I read it in two and a half hours, and I said to myself, ‘I have to give this book to everyone in my team, because the world of outbound marketing is being disrupted. Everyone is time-shifting. You can pause, and you don’t have to watch commercials. Spam filters are out there. Messages aren’t going through.’”

Kardon realized that there was a new way to do marketing, and the tools and techniques that were described in the book were things he didn’t understand. He realized he needed to learn.

“I didn’t really understand what metatags, alt tags, and title tags were,” he says. “I didn’t understand about blog platforms and how WordPress worked. I didn’t understand about pay per click. I didn’t understand all of these things. I was the CMO. Could I have just skated along and had all my team members understand those things? I think I could have, but you can’t outrun the ball. For a certain amount of time you can, but you’ll get to a point where someone asks a technical question or something with a little more depth, and if you haven’t done it, you’re not going to be successful.”

Kardon then did something that many executives are unwilling to do. He asked his team for help. Often. He freely admitted his ignorance but also showed he was willing to learn. And he proved he was willing to jump in and actually do real work rather than just direct from the sidelines.

“I decided just to roll up my sleeves and ask people on my team, ‘How did you do that?’ I had a bunch of people in their 20s, and I would just sit next to them and say, ‘Tell me how you did that. How did you push that out there?’ or ‘What are those social sharing links? How did you put that on there?’ I asked how HTML works and what JavaScript is.”

Today, Kardon’s 15,000+ followers on Twitter ([@bkardon](#)) show that he’s in the thick of the action and making it happen. And his work at Lattice Engines wouldn’t be possible without his willingness to get down into the weeds to understand data and the technologies of digital communications.

“Lattice Engines is all about using patterns and predictive analytics to help salespeople identify those prospects who are most likely to buy now,”

he says of the services that Lattice Engines offers. “Marketers are sitting on mountains of data on purchase histories. What did David Meerman Scott buy? When did he buy it? Did he pay full price? Did he buy the scarf? Was it a gift? Was it for himself? We found there’s a new breed of company that is using past to predict future. You can find patterns that actually predict that David Meerman Scott’s going to buy a purple scarf next month or that you only buy running shoes in November.”

I asked Kardon to offer advice to other senior marketers making the transition: “You’ve got to tell yourself you’re a child again, and you have to relearn what you’re doing.” Kardon managed his fear of making the transition, and you must do the same if you want to achieve similar success.

Manage Your Fear

Every day, I encounter fear in the people I work with. Many company executives and public relations people trace their worries about the new rules of marketing and PR to their concern that “people will say bad things about our company” via social media.

This fear leads them to ignore blogs and online forums and to prohibit employees from participating in social media. And, yet, in every discussion that I’ve had with employees who freely participate in social media, I’ve confirmed that this fear is significantly overblown. Let me repeat: Everyone who has experience tells me this fear is overblown.

Sure, an occasional outlier might vent frustrations online, and now and then a dissatisfied customer will complain (unless you’re in the airline industry, and then it might be more than a few).

But the benefit of this kind of communication is that you can monitor in real time what’s being said and then respond appropriately. Employees, customers, and other stakeholders are talking about your organization offline anyway, so unless you are participating online, you’ll never know what’s being said at all.

The beauty of the web is that you benefit from instant access to conversations you could never have participated in before. And frequently you can turn around impressions by commenting on a negative post. So not only is this fear overblown—it’s often dead wrong. Participating in social media gives you the chance to make sure *fewer* bad things are being said about your company.

Getting the Help You Need (and Rejecting What You Don't)

As you develop a strategy to get started implementing the new rules of marketing and PR, you may find occasions to call on others for help. Many people tell me that they occasionally need the services of an agency to provide them with some extra people to help execute a big project. But I constantly hear that they have difficulty finding people skilled in using the ideas that we've been discussing in this book.

Still others report that well-meaning colleagues and meddlesome bosses have an annoying tendency to look over shoulders and second-guess them as they start a blog, get going on Twitter, or begin filming YouTube videos. Add to that mix the fact that, in many larger organizations, the legal department tends to muck things up with nitpicky rules about what can and cannot be said.

If these sound like some of the problems that you're encountering, fear not! Here are some things you can do to get the help you need, while rejecting what you don't.

The One Question to Ask a Prospective Agency

An increasingly large cadre of self-proclaimed new marketing gurus claim to be really good at generating attention using the new rules of marketing and PR. In addition, I've noticed that in the past several years, established agencies of all kinds are adding departments devoted to social media. Traditional advertising agencies that have focused on television commercials for decades all of a sudden claim to be experts on blogging. Public relations agencies skilled in relating to the media somehow become instant experts on Facebook and Twitter. So how do you navigate all these potential partners if you really do need some help implementing the ideas in this book?

Many people ask me if I can recommend an agency that understands social media or to help them evaluate agencies that claim to be good at this kind of work. My answer to the challenge of finding good people is simple: Ask the prospective agency to show you its social media presence. Ask about such things as blogs, Twitter feeds, YouTube videos, e-books, websites, Facebook profiles, and any other stuff the agency has. Make it an open-ended question.

This is not to say that an agency needs to be active in every medium, but if it is worthy of taking your money to advise you on the use of these tools, then

it should certainly be out there using them. My theory is that if an agency can't blog or tweet or create interesting content such as videos for itself with any success, then it's going to come up short for clients as well.

The answers can be fascinating! All of a sudden many of these self-styled experts clam up and don't say much. This vetting tool eliminates 95 percent of agencies that just plain stink at understanding social media.

When Lawyers Get in the Way

At many larger organizations, the legal department is heavily involved in all marketing and communications initiatives, frequently requiring every blog post and press release to be vetted by a lawyer. In some extremes, corporate legal eagles even forbid employees from starting a blog or participating on Twitter and Facebook at work. I've found that the restrictions come down to two factors: *ignorance of social media* and a *lack of trust in employees*.

Since legal people don't usually understand social media themselves (and don't use them for business in their jobs), they naturally respond by just slapping on controls. After all, their job is to reduce risks within a company, so it's temptingly simple to just say no. This is especially true in companies that mistrust their employees. However, if a company trusts its employees and understands that social media can be a powerful way to do business, then it is the lawyers' job to create an environment where you can do what you know is right.

My recommendation is to work with your managers and your organization's legal team (and perhaps the human resources department as well) to create guidelines that you can operate under. Your company's guidelines should include advice about how to communicate in any medium, including face-to-face conversations, presentations at events, email, social media, online forums and chat rooms, and other forms of communication.

Rather than putting restrictions on social media (that is, the technology), it's better to focus on guiding the way people behave. The corporate guidelines should include statements that employees can't reveal company secrets, can't use inside information to trade stock or influence prices, and must be transparent and provide their real name and affiliation when communicating.

You might take a look at how IBM, a company on the forefront of embracing employee use of social media, has handled this issue. IBM has

developed a set of social computing guidelines¹ for employees' use of blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, and social media. You may have to take the lead on creating the guidelines at your organization, but the effort will be worth it.

Bring a Journalist onto Your Team

A remarkable convergence is upon us right now, creating a perfect opportunity for you to hire someone with the skills that you need. Sadly, many mainstream media outlets are reducing their pools of staff journalists. Newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and television outlets face tough economic challenges, and unfortunately that means that many talented reporters and editors have been (or will be) laid off. I've had a chance to speak with several dozen journalists recently, and many are downcast about career prospects.

Hire a journalist to help you create amazing content. Journalists know how to tell a story.

At the same time, people like you in many different organizations—corporations, nonprofits, government agencies, and educational institutions—understand the value of the ideas we've explored in this book. One of the best ways to create great web content is to actually hire a journalist, either full-time or part-time, to create it. Journalists, both print and broadcast, are great at understanding an audience and creating content that buyers want to consume—it's the bread and butter of their skill set.

I'm not talking about PR and media relations here. This isn't about hiring a journalist to write press releases and try to get his or her former colleagues to write or broadcast about you. Instead, I'm talking about having journalists create stories just as they are doing now—but for a corporation, a government agency, a nonprofit, or an educational institution instead of a media outlet.

Editors are in demand by companies that create terrific online media rooms, like the one at Raytheon that we looked at in Chapter 12 or the one

¹ ibm.com/blogs/zz/en/guidelines.html

over at Cisco Systems.² What better background than journalism could there be for the person running your online media efforts? Is running the Cisco newsroom really that much different than running a newspaper site? For much smaller organizations, maybe it makes sense to hire a freelance print journalist to help you with that e-book. Again, what better way to create valuable information than to hire someone who has done it for years? Sure, web marketing represents a dramatically different job description from, say, beat reporter. Yet times (including the *New York Times*) are changing. And that gives smart marketers an amazing opportunity to hire people with the skills we need.

Managing Your Colleagues and Bosses

If I may be so bold as to boil down into one word thousands of conversations I've had over the past several decades, as well as my more than 10 years' worth of blogging and the entire contents of this book, it would be this: *attention*. Entrepreneurs, CEOs, and business owners want people to pay attention to their company. Marketers, PR pros, advertisers, and salespeople are on the payroll to generate attention. Hopefully, this book opened your eyes to a new approach to this classic problem.

I've identified four main ways to generate attention in today's marketing landscape. We've discussed them throughout these pages, so this list is not really new, but seeing them all collected together will give us some fresh perspective for dealing with people who might be skeptical or meddlesome.

1. *You can buy attention with advertising* such as television commercials, magazine and newspaper ads, the yellow pages, billboards, trade show floor space, direct-mail lists, and the like.
2. *You can get attention from the editorial gatekeepers* at radio and TV stations, magazines, newspapers, and trade journals.
3. *You can have a team of salespeople generate attention one person at a time* by knocking on doors, calling people on the telephone, sending personal emails, or waiting for individuals to walk into your showroom.
4. *You can earn attention online by using the ideas in this book*, creating something interesting, and publishing it online for free: a YouTube

² newsroom.cisco.com/home

video, blog, research report, series of photos, Twitter stream, e-book, Facebook fan page, or other piece of web content.

To understand the motivations of your colleagues and bosses as they offer advice and give you unwanted criticism, I recommend that you know and understand these four means of generating attention. And you should understand the point of view of the person you are talking to about attention, especially when the inevitable pushback about earning it in new ways surfaces.

You see, most organizations have a corporate culture centered on one of these approaches. As examples, Procter & Gamble primarily generates attention through advertising, Apple via PR, EMC via sales, and Zappos via the new rules of marketing and PR. Often the defining organizational culture springs from the founder or CEO's strong point of view. So if the CEO came up through the sales track, all attention problems are likely to become sales problems. Chances are that your colleagues and bosses did not come up via the social media track or read this book.

The point is, you'll have to *convince* your boss to invest in social media, because it's likely he or she doesn't consider it the most important way of gaining attention. Most organizations overspend on advertising and sales and underinvest in social media, but nearly all organizations should be doing some combination of each. If you can help your bosses and colleagues understand this trend, they'll probably lighten up a little.

Great for Any Organization

There's no doubt that your organization will benefit from your getting out there and creating web content in whatever form you're most comfortable with. But I'm also convinced that no matter who you are or what you do, your professional and personal life will improve, too. If you are an innovator using the ideas in this book, it may lead to greater recognition in the office. And if you're like many bloggers and podcasters I know, you will derive a therapeutic benefit as well.

It's fun to blog and tweet, and it makes you feel good to get your ideas out into the world.

If you're like me, you will prefer to write rather than create audio or video content. But I know plenty of people who hate to write and have created terrific photo, video, and audio content to reach buyers. And it works for all kinds of organizations: corporations, nonprofits, rock bands, and politicians. People often say to me: "But I'm just a __ [fill in the blank with *pastor*, *painter*, *lawyer*, *consultant*, *sales representative*, *auto dealer*, or *real estate agent*, for example]; why should I blog or create a podcast?" My answer is that not only will you reach your buyers directly with targeted content, but you'll also have fun, too—web content is for everyone, not just big companies.

In fact, one of my all-time favorite examples of success with the new rules of marketing and PR comes from an unlikely marketer: the pastor of a church in Washington, D.C. But his isn't a typical church, because he doesn't actually have a church building. Instead he uses video technology, blogs, podcasts, and the web to tell stories and build a spiritual community both online and offline.

"The church should be using technology to reach people; that's what Gutenberg did in the fifteenth century with the printing press," says Mark Batterson, lead pastor of National Community Church (also known as the Theater Church), a multisite church that conducts many services per week in six nontraditional locations. "Most churches have a church building, but we feel that a building can be an obstacle to some people, so we do church in theaters and have built the largest coffeehouse in the Washington, D.C., area."

What distinguishes National Community Church is Batterson's approach of embracing technology and web marketing and applying it to church. The vehicles include a content-rich website,³ podcasts of the weekly services, a motivational webcast series, video, an email newsletter, Batterson's extremely popular "evotional" blog⁴ (tagline: "Spirit Fuel"), and his Twitter feed (@MarkBatterson) with nearly 100,000 followers. "The greatest message deserves the greatest marketing," Batterson says. "I am challenged that Madison Avenue and Hollywood are so smart at delivering messages. But I believe that we need to be just as smart about how we deliver our messages."

Attendance at National Community Church includes several thousand adults in an average weekend; 70 percent of them are single people in their

³ theaterchurch.com

⁴ markbatterson.com

20s. “I think we attract 20-somethings because our personality as a church lends itself to 20-somethings,” Batterson says. “Our two key values are authenticity and creativity. That plays itself out in the way we do church. I think that church should be the most creative place on the planet. The medieval church had stained glass to tell the gospel story to the churchgoers, who were mostly illiterate. We use the movie studio to tell the story to people. We use video to add color and to add flavor to what we do. If Jesus had video in his day, it wouldn’t surprise me if he made short films.”

Batterson’s focus on the website, podcasts, and online video (as well as video at the services) means that National Community Church staff members have some unique job titles, including media pastor, digital pastor, and buzz coordinator. “We want to use technology for really good purposes,” Batterson says. “Our website and my blog are our front door to National Community Church. The site is a virtual location in a sense. We have a lot more people who listen to the podcast and watch the webcast than who go to the services, so it is a great test drive for people. They can get a sense of the church before they arrive physically.”

Batterson has gained online fame well beyond the Washington, D.C., area—his blog is followed by tens of thousands of readers all over the world, and the podcast is one of the fastest-growing church podcasts in the United States. He has also written several books, including *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day: How to Survive and Thrive When Opportunity Roars*. “Blogging cuts six degrees of separation into three,” he says. “I write knowing that my audience is another pastor in Australia, a housewife in Indiana, my friends, and people in Washington, D.C. Marketing through my blog is powerful. For example, last week I did a blog post about my book and asked my blogging friends to also post about it. We went up to number 44 on the Amazon bestseller list, and Amazon sold out of the book that day. They just ordered another thousand copies.”

Batterson’s enthusiasm for how churches can use the web has caught the attention of thousands of other church leaders who follow his blog. “The two most powerful forms of marketing are word of mouth and what I call word of mouse. A guy named John Wesley, who founded the Methodist Church, traveled 250,000 miles on horseback and preached something like 40,000 sermons. With one click of the mouse, I preach that many sermons with my podcast—that’s word of mouse. It is about leveraging the unique vehicles on the web. The message has not changed, but the medium has changed. We need to continually find new vehicles to get the messages out.”

Now It's Your Turn

Isn't the power of web content and the new rules of marketing and PR something? Here's a guy who's a church leader *without* a church building, and through innovative use of a blog, a podcast, and some video, he has become a leader in his field. He's got a bestselling book and tens of thousands of devoted online followers. Whether you're religious or not, you've got to be impressed with Batterson's business savvy and with the way the new rules have helped him reach his buyers.

You can do it, too. It doesn't matter what line of work you're in or what group of buyers you're trying to reach. You can harness the power of the web to reach your target audience directly.

If you're like many of my readers, those who see me speak at conferences, and the people who attend my masterclasses, you have colleagues who will argue with you about the new rules. They will say that the old rules still apply. They will tell you that you need to spend big bucks on advertising. They will tell you that the only way to do PR is to get the media to write about you. By now you know that they are wrong. If I haven't convinced you myself, surely the 50 or so successful people profiled in these pages must have. Go on. Be like the people you met in this book—get out there and make it happen!