

ABC's of Selling

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Introduction

An evolving approach to customer

The last twenty-five years have seen a revolution in sales and marketing.

Back in the 1990s marketing was just advertising and the ABCs of Selling were in charge - Always Be Closing.

But they were the old ABCs. The ascendance of digital and mobile has changed all that, fragmenting your potential audience and putting them in charge.

There's been a real reduction in brands' abilities to dictate the conversation, with customers now empowered to decide how and when to engage.

Put simply, the consumer's now in charge, and brands are having to find new ways to engage.

Mind you, it's not that the ABCs have gone away... they've just adapted. And if you've not followed the change, then your business won't be reaching its growth potential.



To understand how, consider the new

“ABCs - Always Add Value, Be Visible, and be Consistent.

If you want to understand what this means for your business, you're in luck. Market Fit is all about unlocking your growth opportunity, with smart content in digital channels creating a better customer engagement. Knowing how to harness this and convert potential customers into paying customers and growth is where we come in, how we get to Add Value for you.

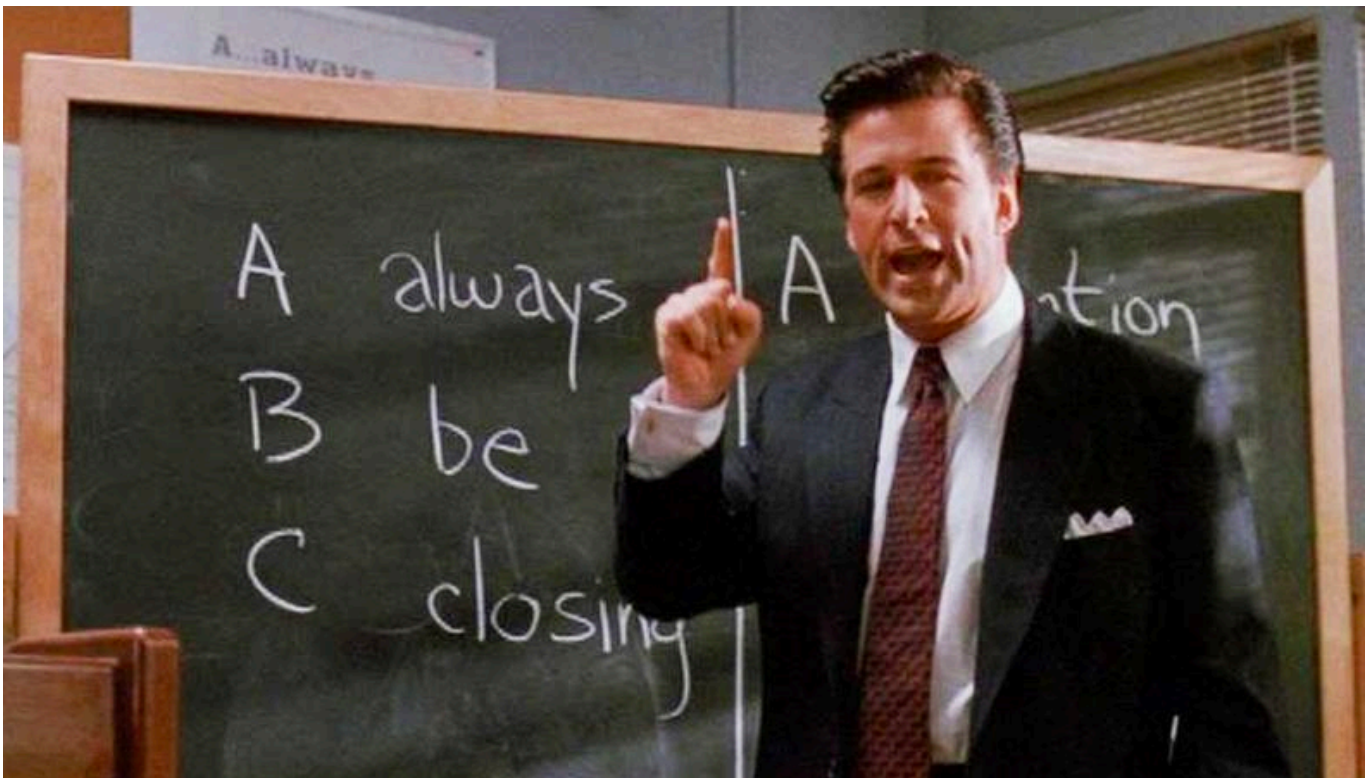
In this eBook we'll spend time looking at the ABCs in more depth. It's an exciting time to be in business, as digital tools narrow the gap with even the biggest competitor. A smart approach to value and messaging can make all the difference in your search for growth.

Let me take you through the new ABCs of Selling and show how you can get your share of the pie.

The Old ABCs of Selling

It's 1992, and at the prestigious Venice Film festival a new kind of film sweeps all before it. Glengarry Glen Ross is profane and nasty, with despicable characters everywhere.

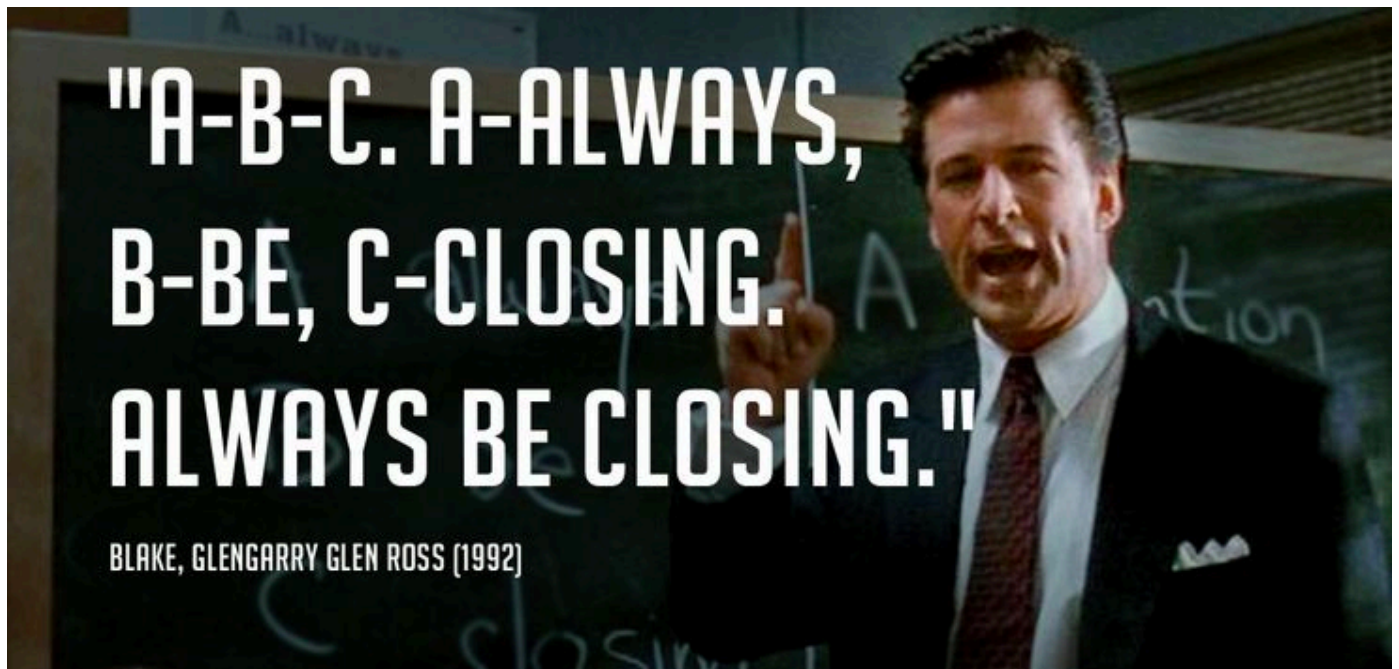
Alec Baldwin's Blake leads a group of morally bankrupt salesmen through their paces, with backs stabbed and dupes conned. Looking back nearly years later, the film looks like a 90s Wolf of Wall Street, outrageously fun and a real satire of the attitude of the times.



Almost three decades on the film's still a treat. While it's easy to forget just how good Alec Baldwin was in the 90s, take a look at the famous ABCs - the ABCs (Always Be Closing) of Selling - scene. It's a heroic performance full of hard, harsh stuff. You've always got to be closing...

taking money from those silly enough to give it to you... and stabbing your colleagues in the back to make the sale.





The New ABCs of Selling

From hard sell to adding value

Watching Alec Baldwin ripping into his sales team with the ABCs - Always Be Closing - of selling it's hard not to feel just a wee bit impressed. Or scared. It's vintage hard sales.

'Take it from others before they take it from you',

'never give a sucker an even break',

'and remember customers are just fools waiting to be parted from their money.'

'Your job as a salesperson? Take every last thing you can from every last customer you can.'

The ABCs never go out fashion. But these days there's a different meaning.

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A means Adding Value. If you can't add value then you're gone.

B means Be Visible. Digital (and especially social) lets everyone compete. It's never been easier to stay front of mind with your customer.

C means Consistency. Consistency of message across all channels and at all stages of a purchase journey.

A

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A is for adding value

Let's look into value. And more crucially, how a focus on value can turn your business around.

You'll hear a lot of people talk these days about "adding value" or how they are "delivering value to the marketplace". But if you listen carefully, very few understand what that means. To really "get" adding value, start with four things:

1. Find your ideal customer

Too many businesses try to talk to everyone, and in doing so, never talk to anyone, they become middle of the road noise that can easily be skipped over and ignored.

You need to define and find your ideal customer, find and understand their world view, and related to your product what are their dreams and desires?

It's your job to find that ideal customer, to get under their skin and make them real to you. Who are they? What do they really want, really need? What do they secretly fear, and how does that inform their worldview?

Find a way to talk to them directly, in their language and move from telling to correspondence that also goes a long way to delivering value.

You see - knowing your customer means knowing where they are today, and where they want to be tomorrow. That knowledge is crucial for you, giving your communications a vital inside line. Knowing where your customer wants to go gives you a green light to produce content that helps them, letting them see how you add value on this journey.

2. Understand your customer's real problem

So here's the thing. Often the problem you thought you were hired to fix won't be the real issue. That's because typically, people often have two problems they are trying to solve a rational problem, the one we see. And a much deeper emotional problem.

Where you can really connect is identifying both the rational AND the emotional parts of the problem.

Here's a good example:

When a customer goes to a mortgage broker, they have a rational challenge. They want a mortgage. But underlying that is an emotional level. Getting a customer the right mortgage means more than securing finance. When a broker does their job, they are really getting their customer on the property ladder. And here in NZ, that's a massive part of our psyche. Emotionally, hitting this need is far more valuable to the customer, and likely to deliver a much stronger relationship with their broker. Smart brokers understand this and so build their business around meeting their customers' emotional needs.

Or in the B2B space:

Take your accountant rationally they sell Xero, debits and credits, tax returns, maybe if your lucky some financial advice or monthly management reporting. But what they are really selling (emotionally) is piece of mind. I know my accounts are in order, I know if I need to worry about cashflow, I know I'll be compliant with the IRD and they won't come knocking for the business.

3. It's all about them

If you want to be successful in talking to an audience then remember it's not about you, it's never about you, you just aren't important to the customer.

What is important is their own needs and desires. Where they are heading, what they are trying to move toward or move away from.

To add value you must relentlessly focus your brand on the customer and not on yourself.

4. Help them by actually helping them

The best way to help demonstrate that you can help a client is by actually helping them. Provide them with content and information that is actionable and truly helpful.

Demonstrate how you have helped others in the same position with case studies and stories.

And here is the kicker, give away more IP than you feel comfortable with giving away.

A lot of people I speak to don't like this idea as they think the customer is going to steal it and use it without you.

Firstly, they aren't they don't know how to implement it no matter how much you give them as typically the learning curve is too steep. Secondly, if they do that, they were never going to be your customer anyway, they weren't going to buy. Thirdly, they may try to implement it themselves but realise it is too hard, in that case if you are consistent (see below), then they will come back to you to do it properly.

And finally, if you operate in a crowded market place, and let's face it we all do, who is a customer going to choose, the person or business that teases them with bits or information or the one that provides the most value?

Take The Time To Do It Right

Nothing I've said so far is rocket science. It's just a case of taking the time to understand, and being up for the hard work this needs. Slowing down to get foundational thinking right means you're building a platform capable of injecting real speed to your business.

It takes rigour to do this, which is why few do. Most don't have the time or energy.

Foundational thinking is hard when you're rushing to a solution, usually without clarity on the true nature of the problem.

Finally, identifying the problem can also bring new challenges - is it worth fixing? Is the solution really better than the current scenario?

Asking these questions show your clients you are capable of adding value, capable of seeing their business beyond the immediate (and maybe misleading) challenges. It's in spending the time to understand a client's real challenges that you get to prove your ongoing value.

Authority

All of the above leads to the other A, Authority, you become the authority in your marketplace.

It's how they know like and trust you, how you become the person or business your prospects seek out, the one they buy from. You become the one who gets to serve them.



B

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B is for Be Visible

“B”, as everyone knows, stands for Visible...

Taking on a Goliath

Joking aside, visibility is the Achilles heel of most businesses.

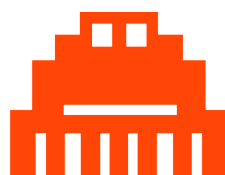
How to compete with the big guy's marketing and promotional budgets?

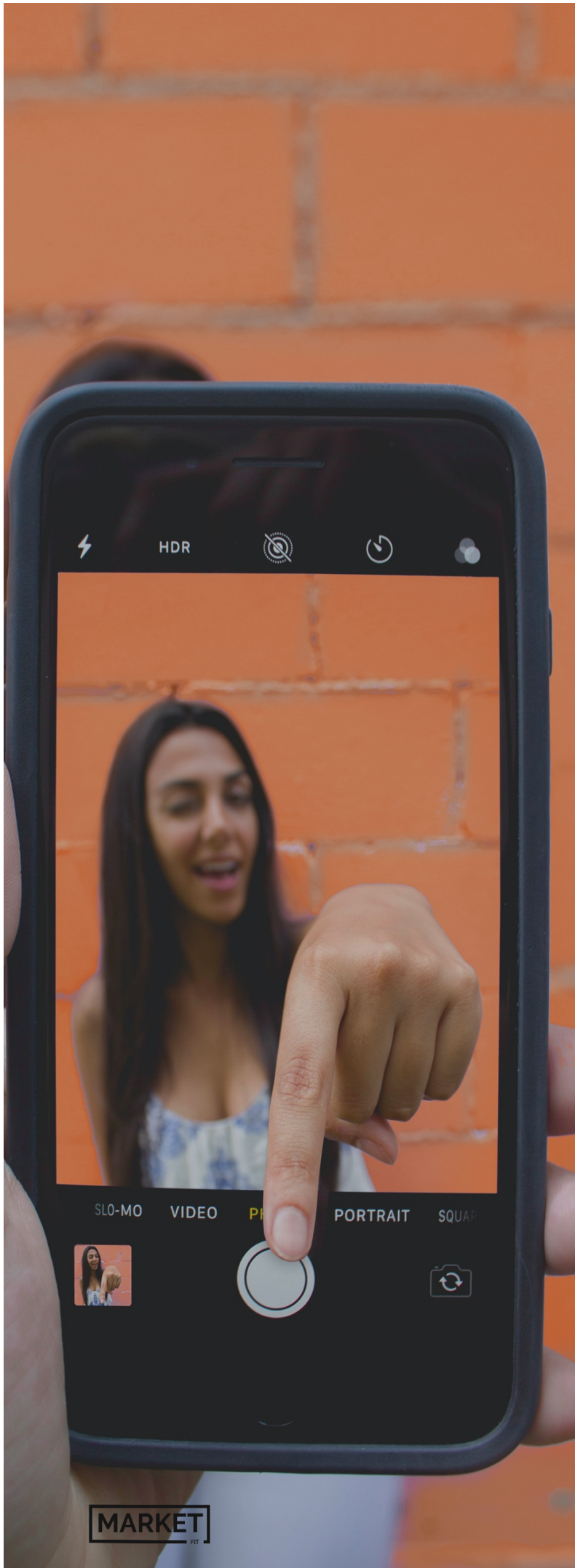
How to access traditional (broadcast) media like TV or newspapers?

Especially when it's so expensive?

We've already talked about adding value, but without visibility you're not in the game. And with traditional marketing so expensive, unless you've got money to burn you've got a problem.

Luckily, things have changed. You don't hear the word “broadcast” so much these days. Audience consumption habits have shifted. The old days of scheduled “must-watch” TV are all but gone, just as they are for printed mass-media. Even radio is feeling the pinch (come on down Spotify). And that's where you find your advantage - fragmented audiences are your new best friend. Because if you've done your added value homework, you'll already know your ideal customer. And if you really know your ideal customer, it's never been easier for you to find (and reach) them.





A studio in your hand

And speaking of TV - here's your second advantage. Your smartphone is your very own TV camera. Smartphones mean it's never been easier to make your own promotional videos.

Recording and publishing content has been democratised in ways unimaginable even five years ago. The humble iPhone can record in 4k, a hundred bucks buys you a brilliant microphone and good editing software is now free.

Which brings me to your final advantage.

Social media platforms. Targeting algorithms have the power to serve your exact, precise and ideal audience.

This is the natural result of broadcast's decline - social channels know more about their users than any other business in our history.

Using this to reach your niche is now a very real and achievable aim.

Your Obligation to Your Customer

So now we have an obligation.

If we know how to add value, and we know who our ideal customer is, don't you think we have an obligation to be visible to them, to help them?

If we're serious about solving customer pain points visibility is no longer a nice to have.

But it's also the part many smaller businesses struggle to understand.

C

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C is for Consistency

But of course, C also stands for Customer and Conversion. Let's take a look at what consistency means, and how consistency delivers more customers and conversions.

Defining Consistency

What does “consistency” really mean? Well, for starters, consistency is a hugely important part of marketing. In many industries, customers only spend two to three weeks in their active “in-market” phase. Upstream of this they are in their research and prospect phases. Consistency is being in front of your prospective customers through each of these phases. It's being there with a recognisable and regular message. And it's vital if you expect to achieve cut-through.

Committing to your customer

As customers move through the buying journey, their research will usually take them to your website or social media profile at least two to three times. This can be spread over days or even months. So driving customers via digital or social marketing means consistency in messaging, spread over longer periods.

Now we have another obligation... your consistency can't just be in one channel. Remember that your customer these days is fragmented - they don't just use one channel for information. So your messaging needs consistency whether in digital marketing, social, physical advertising (if you decide to go this route), and then of course onto your site.

While it sounds like a lot of work, it doesn't need to be, you can produce one piece of content and cut and distribute it across multiple channels, this is called content shredding.

Let's take a look at your customer pool again, and what consistency looks like for them. They tend to fall into three camps.

1. Customers currently in market. These guys started researching around a month back. And even when moving to an in-market state, they remain researching. What if they've already been to your site or social channel? You've probably already educated them - so maybe you now consider making an offer to bring them even closer, or at least provide them deeper information. If that information or offer is consistent with your first interaction it makes it easier to keep them engaged.
These customers are the ones your customers typically spend a fortune fighting over, because your smart and using using the ABC's by the time they hit this phase the fight is over, as they already know like and trust you.
2. Customers who aren't yet researching, but are starting to think about their particular problem or pain point. The largest group you need to consider, at any point these guys make up 20-50% of your potential pool. The importance of getting in front of these guys shouldn't need emphasising... this is all about the education, helping them transition from passive to actively in the market. Inconsistent approaches here create friction and confusion - the last thing you need!
3. And finally, there's a whole bunch of customers who aren't yet in-market. These guys may not even know they have a problem. But that doesn't mean you can ignore them. Consistency in messaging, even to those not yet searching, reinforces your chances of success when they do enter the market. A great tip for these guys? Focus on gently educating and informing them.

The long game

Consider how different the needs of these three customer groups are. If you're using content marketing to reach these customers it should be clear why consistency rules. But there's another thing at play here, something I see a lot of people on my social feed getting wrong.

If you are serious about the ABCs of Selling you can't just jump into content and expect an immediate result. Consistency and customer lifecycles demand a longer play. The relationship you and your customer need to forge takes time to establish, across all the stages of customer commitment. And that's only going to come with consistency and a long term strategy from you.

Delivering results through a long term commitment

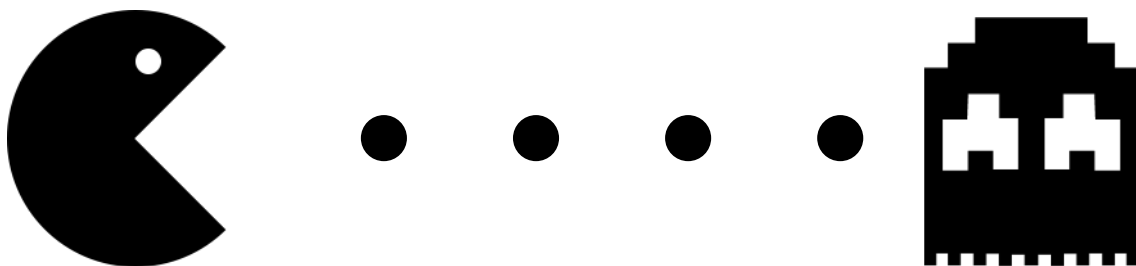
For me, this is about an investment in the future. Consistency lets potential customers learn how I can add value and help them grow their business. It lets my prospective customers know, like, and trust me. Which makes it that much for them to buy from me.

This is about much more than a video here, a social post there... the longer I'm committed to content the more I realise consistency comes from ongoing commitment. It's a process that can take months - relationships I establish now might take months to deliver me customers. It's a commitment to a long term content play, aligned with consistency, that will deliver results for your business.

Dialling into what really matters to your customers

Remember in the A, Adding Value section, we said that you need to know and understand your ideal customer, well the other benefit of leveraging social media channels and consistency is when you put out consistent content, you get to see what topics are resonating with your customers and which ones aren't. You can sharpen the saw and double down on what really matters to them.

The more you are in the market, the more you learn, the more you learn the deeper you can go, the deeper you can go, the stronger the connection.



Content Shredding

This is the process of taking one piece of content and repurposing it across multiple formats and channels. This eBook started as a video series, with 5 videos, the intro and then a video for A, B, C and D.

Distributed across, Facebook, LinkedIn, www.marketfit.co, and Vimeo, both organically and with paid promotion

It was converted into five blogs, for the website and sent to the Market Fit database.

As it got traction we decided to use it at a basis, refresh, rewrite and expand it for this eBook.

Parts of the eBook will be shredded and pushed across all of our channels.

D

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D is fore Deals

Deals and your customers

Now I've got a bit of a bonus for you. This time it's D... or "Deals". I'll show you how a new approach to offers can extend your customer relationship and ultimately create an entry point for your customers to your business.

Changing your approach to deals

Organisations use deals or offers in different ways. A seasonal business will use deals to quit end of line product. Clothing retailers are a great example. By contrast, a business with reasonable certainty of demand might use deals differently - think of hotels or airlines, with deals to attract early-bird customers, or last-minute deals to offset the sunk cost of unsold rooms or seats.

But there's another way deals can help your business. It may involve you changing the way you think of deals, losing the traditional hard sell of the Old ABCs and instead applying our new lens. Think back to the New ABCs - always Adding Value, Being Visible, and Consistency. A clever use of deals can be an additional call to action, another way for you to add more value. In short, the right deal means another opportunity for you to extend your opportunity to convert a prospect into a customer.



The importance of a clear call to action

What do I mean by this?

One of the first things I do with new customers is a deep dive on their value proposition. Time and again I see the same thing...



most of my clients struggle to provide clear and compelling calls to action online. Beyond the brochure-ware component of their site there's often nothing but contact details. There's no offer to the customer, no deal to pull a prospect closer, and no way for my client to continue offering value.

Here's where a new approach to deals comes in. Forget about the hard sell - if you've been paying attention you know the New ABCs leave the hard sell behind. Think about what you are offering your customer. Many times it's access to your knowledge and experience. And in this context, a deal can be as simple as more information, moving the customer along the buying journey.



It might be a download, an eBook, an invitation to a webinar, the offer of a free strategy session... any of these things can be your call to action, the offer of information, and your chance to keep adding value.

Keep your consistency

So if deals means adding more value, it's just as vital you remember consistency. Once you have your call to action, include it in every communication. Once you have a prospect at this stage do not confuse them with multiple offers. Be very clear... if you like and value this information, simply follow my call to action to get more.

This is such a simple and elegant way to address the lack of a call to action on your site. Anyone who spends any time on my site will know I practice what I preach. I usually offer either a free download or eBook, or a free strategy session call to discuss a prospect's business. These calls to action are my most effective business driver, and the entry point for most clients to my business.



A continual cycle

But it doesn't stop there. If a prospect takes up your offer of information and downloads a guide, follow it up with more value. The best way to convert a prospect to a client is more value. It doesn't matter if it's emails, the offer of a free call, an invite to an exclusive webinar... the important thing is staying in front of your prospect and continuing to add value. You see, the New ABCs aren't set and forget. To be really effective you need to think of them as a continual cycle, with you continuing to prove your value to a prospect, right until they're ready to commit.



What Should You Do With What You Have Just Read?

Over to you...

So there we go. The New ABCs of Selling -

- Adding value,
- Being visible, and
- Consistency.
- And of course, don't forget about **Deals**

Simple and uncomplicated entries to your business are your customers' friends, and could make all the difference.

But there's a catch, it only works if you implement it.

I've laid it all out for you, follow these steps and you will see great results.

Now, nothing in here is that tricky - but the grunt work to get going can be daunting.

I know... I've done it.

And it's hard to find the time when you're working on the inside, dealing with distractions, disasters, and just keeping the business running.

So that's where I come in.

Hiring an expert to get you up and running might be the best choice you make for your success.

If you want to learn more about the New ABCs of Selling and the difference they could make to your business and more importantly you want to implement them flick me an email or call me.

I'd love to talk. kursten@marketfit.co

Click here for a free strategy 45 minute session



Golden Rules

1

Understand what their Dreams and Desires are

2

Understand you are actually solving two problems for them, the first is the rational problem, and the second, the most important is the emotional problem

3

Deeply understand your ideal customer

4

It's not about you

5

The best way to demonstrate how you can help customers is by actually helping them

6

Give away more value and content than you are comfortable with

7

Content shred

8

Leverage technology and the platforms we have today.

9

Play the long game: be consistent, don't jump in and out of the market

10

Make offers, always offer to move prospective clients along the buyer's journey

About Market Fit

Leading a business as a business owner, MD, or a GM is one of the most amazing experiences today but it comes with a heavy price. That heavy price is, you wear a lot of different hats and you work a lot of long hours.

Marketing requires its own expertise which means it's like taking on another full time job, on top of all your other responsibilities. And if you don't have a high performing marketing team you are not only wasting money but leaving money on the table and even worse, allowing your competitors to win.

What most people do is continue to be frustrated with their marketing and business growth or lose hope on marketing because you don't have the time to master it and you don't see the ROI in it. Being a business owner myself I understand this pain all too well, working so hard to deliver outstanding results that you forget to take care of what comes after.

You don't need to let this happen to you, and this is why I created Marketing Fit because so many business owners have a great business but don't know how to market correctly that it makes them want to quit, in my 20 years of marketing experience, I have developed a method to make Marketing work for you whether you have a marketing team or not!



Successful marketing is

- 1. Bring the customer to the heart of what you do**
- 2. Connect with your customer**
- 3. Create value and**
- 4. Making your competition irreverent**

Kursten Shalfoon





[Click here for a free strategy](#)
[45 minute session](#)