

the little book of
marketing
genius

peter fisk

About the author



Peter Fisk is a highly experienced marketer, having spent many years working for the likes of British Airways and American Express, Coca Cola and Microsoft.

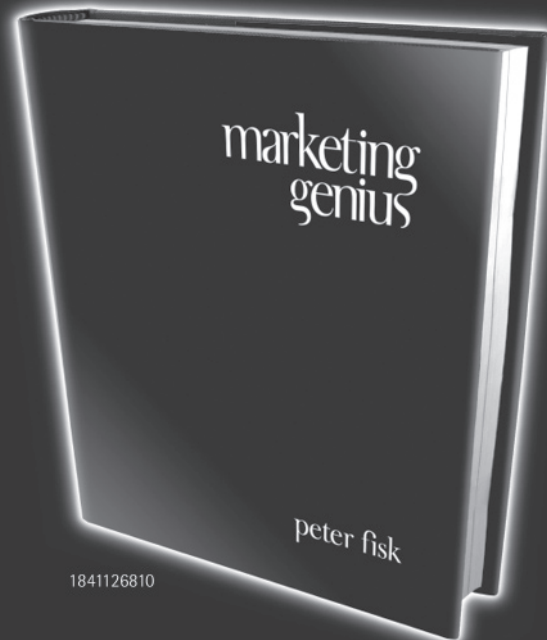
His new book, *Marketing Genius*, describes how a more left and right-brain approach to business is required to seize the best opportunities in today's markets. More visionary and focused, creative and analytical, today's marketing must respond to the rising power of customers and limitless potential of technologies, to deliver today whilst creating tomorrow, and to achieve extraordinary results for customers and business.

Peter jointly leads strategic innovation firm The Foundation, helping companies to grow more effectively by seeing things differently, believing in new possibilities, and delivering exceptional results. He was previously the CEO of the world's largest marketing organisation, the Chartered Institute of Marketing, led the global marketing consulting team of PA Consulting Group, and managed brands and strategy at British Airways.

He is an inspirational speaker - on customers and brands, strategy and innovation - thoughtful and considered, provocative and entertaining. In January 2006, Business Strategy Review described him as one of the most interesting new business thinkers.

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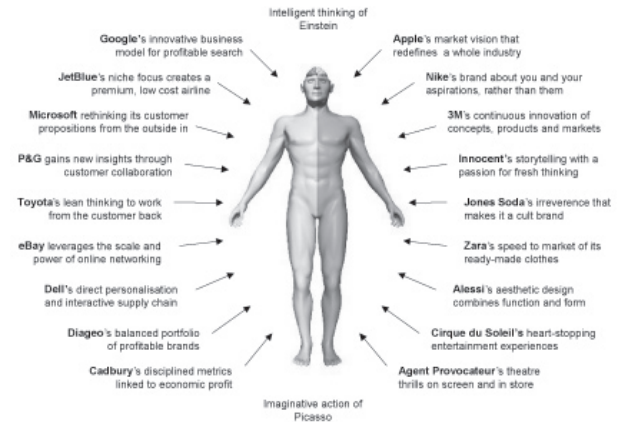
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The genius of marketing

The genius of marketing

From the vision of Apple to the insight of Zara, the passion of Nike and irreverence of Jones Soda, the entrepreneurship of Jet Blue and thrill of Agent Provocateur, today's leading brands think and act differently.



The "genius" of marketing lies in the ability to make sense of apparent conflicts or paradox. It lies in the ability to connect outside and inside, markets and business, customers and shareholders, creativity and analysis, promises and reality, today and tomorrow.

Customer insight and creativity are important, but must be combined with the analytical and commercial rigour that drives strategy, innovation and growth.

Today's business leaders, like Einstein and Picasso before them, see things differently, as a result believe different things, and by applying their intelligence in more imaginative ways can do extraordinary things.

Taking off the blinkers

Too many businesses are obsessed with their inside – how to do what they do better, reduce their cost base, automate their processes – rather than their outside. This important but limiting preoccupation – plus the blinkers of functional silos and industry conventions – means that businesses often miss what matters most.

Similarly, the obsession with more data, more analysis, more measurement, and more process leaves little space for intuition, creativity and the bigger picture. We look to employ people who are masters of the spreadsheet, rather than for their different skills and experiences. It is a recipe by which companies will converge to sameness, for incrementalism, and ultimately for irrelevance.

Ask Kodak, the market leader in photographic film for many decades, who within a handful of years found that their market had disappeared, swallowed up by alien digital worlds led by the likes of Sony and HP. They had not even been on their radar screen, until it was too late.

The best opportunities and biggest challenges are outside not inside. Market change and its implications are often discontinuous, requiring more significant responses. They should be the starting point of any business strategy rather than a consequence. Market-thinking should be at the heart of decision making, and market-thinkers at the heart of business.

Apple watched the market for music fragment and blur into chaos, as new technologies disrupted the industry model and consumers began to rebel, new entrants challenged the economics and old formats quickly became obsolete. Apple brought together an innovative solution in the form of hardware and software – iPod and iTunes – to offer a way through this turmoil, to redefine the industry dynamics, with a compelling and profitable solution.

The rise of customer power

Whilst borders have blurred and markets merged, within markets there is a shift from economies of surplus demand to those of surplus supply. Customers now call the shots. Most of us, in the western world, typically have everything that we need, so our wants are more emotional and unarticulated. Customers are more different too, more informed and less tolerant. Gone is the day when we fit into a well-defined segment, or adhere to average market research statistics. Customer expectations are sky high, and their loyalty is rare.

The noise in markets is deafening, as we are bombarded with at least 1500 commercial stimuli every day, many causing resentment through the deluge of direct mail and intrusive telemarketing. A young person is likely to have seen around 150,000 different ads by their 18th birthday. Indeed kids have learnt to cope with more – research shows that they can typically deal with 5.2 activities at once, whereas adults can only survive with 1.6 – and men even less. Therefore we need to address them in different ways.

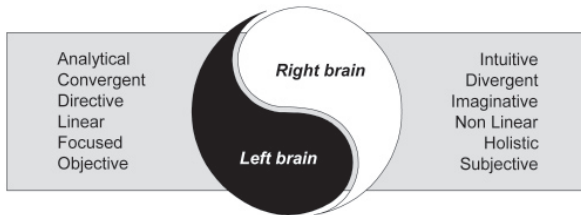
We surf through 300 channels of television, dispersing our lifestyle patterns, and destroying the predictability that advertisers used to rely on. And neuroscientists have found that consumers typically choose which brand to buy within 2.6 seconds, not long to turn marketing promises into profits. And the competitive response has been to

work harder rather than smarter, with more products, more options, more campaigns – product lifecycles have typically fallen by 70% in the last decade, whilst 75% of customers now turn to personal recommendation, rather than anything a brand might tell them.

The new market leaders

So what should business leaders do? How can they throw off their blinkers and address the emerging market landscapes, and address the new balance of power?

The essence of genius is to apply intelligence in a more imaginative way. Imagination is required to see the uncharted waters, the bigger picture, to drive more sustainable innovation and differentiation. However business also requires more intelligence than ever, to make sense of complexity and provide focus amidst unlimited opportunity.



Analysis and creativity are richly complementary, despite us often seeking to label people in one way or another. Human beings have evolved with brains that can do both, and as result perform better. Analysis helps focus creativity on areas of most impact; creativity helps to break through data to find insight and direction. It requires the left and right brain to work harder together, and to embrace the yin-yang opportunities.

Today's geniuses must combine the scientific mind of Albert Einstein, with the creative touch of Pablo Picasso, one a phenomenal mathematician who could only reach new places through hypothesis, the other a radically unconventional artist but with a technical training. So how would such figures approach the challenges of today's markets?

Perhaps king of movies and technology, Steve Jobs, designer-cum-philosopher Philippe Starck, or accountant turned marketer Phil Knight of Nike can give us some clues. However it is not only for the chosen few. You too can achieve "genius" in your everyday decisions and actions. A genius thinks more intelligently by making sense of chaos, and acts more creatively to cut through the noise and engage the sceptics, and as a result is able to deliver extraordinary and definable results.

Seeing things differently

Like with the Alessi orange squeezer, the transforming effect of iTunes, or the brand endorsement of Michael Jordan, a genius is able to see things differently, and thereby has the belief and opportunity to do extraordinary things.

In business, the starting point is to see the world from where customers stand – to see products and services, business and sectors, the way real people see them. The obvious questions then no longer have simple answers – which market are you in, who are your customers, what do they want, how do they use your products, who are your competitors, what is your difference, where to focus, wand hat will happen next.

The magic however, is not just in the insight but in the actions that can follow. A business leader who sees a new landscape, with

appropriate direction and stimulus, develops the belief and conviction to act differently – to disrupt the industry conventions, to do what everyone else has avoided, to innovate the market rather than just a product.

Doing extraordinary things

Strategies become more directional and flexible, but with stronger focus on the best opportunities, existing and emerging. Planning starts to work from the future back, rather than an extrapolation of today. Doing the right thing matters more than doing things right. And doing it right and fast, before somebody else grabs the new ground, or best ideas. Knowledge becomes a commodity, the ability to turn insight into innovation creates the advantage.

Look at the leaders of Dell or Tesco, eBay or Zara – they are market-thinking people by background, who intuitively “start with the customer and all else follows” (as Google defines its number one principle). They bring an outside-in approach, starting with the market rather than what they have done before, obsessed with their customers and competitors, championing the brand and innovation, constantly searching for new ways to stay ahead.

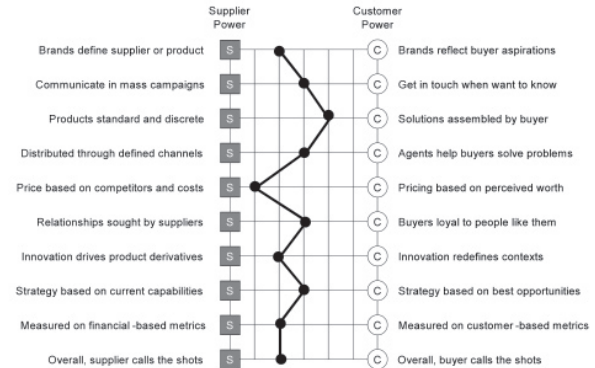
Indeed when the CEO comes from a marketing background, as 21% of FTSE CEOs do, then the impact can be even greater. Recent research shows that such companies generate 5.9% better shareholder returns than those led by people with an inside-out, operational perspective.

The “outside in” business

An outside-in approach to business starts with the market. A market strategy – defining where and how to compete, and what to do for short and long-term commercial success – must sit at

the core of a business' decision-making framework. This requires fundamental choices, about which markets to focus on, and how to be positioned within them – less about legacy and capability, more about opportunity and customers.

An outside-in brand defines what it does for customer, rather than what it does itself. Outside-in innovation starts by redefining context before considering products and services. Outside-in communication is less about blanket campaigns, more about customer-initiated dialogues. Outside-in channels are no longer an extended arm of suppliers, but trusted agents of customers. Outside-in relationships are more based on communities than transactions.



Amazon, for example, uses its intelligence and imagination to anticipate and meet the needs of each customer. Not only did Jeff Bezos and his expeditionary marketers seize the new “whitespace” by leveraging virtual technologies and physical delivery, but they harness customer power, fundamentally doing business on customer terms, and doing it profitably.

The “today tomorrow” paradox

Whilst customers must be the orientation of business, performance is ultimately measured financially. This only becomes a tension when the two goals get out of kilter. Over the longer-term, creating exceptional value for customers is the only way to create significant value for shareholders. Profitable growth enables this virtuous circle.

Shareholders invest in companies in order to get a return on their money. They look at the future earning potential of a company, the cash the company is likely to generate over future years, the new markets and products which will drive it, and the strong brands and relationships which make it more certain. They take the longer-term view.

Yet in business, we spend most of our time focused on the short-term. Of course, this matters because cash is needed to pay the bills, and provide some indication of future success. However the long-term matters more. Marketers, in particular, end up torn between the short and long-term, between sales promotion and brand building, product derivatives and real innovation.

Indeed shareholders look for the things that the forward orientation of marketing provides: profitable growth through market and brand strategy, innovation and relationships.

When P&G acquired Gillette in early 2005, only \$6bn of the \$57bn purchase price was for its tangible assets, the vast majority of the value being due its brands and relationships. On average 86% of market value is intangible, which is the real measure of the worth of new ideas, the right market choices, and the brands to ensure future success in them.

Geniuses wanted

In today's incredibly complicated world, every business faces enormous change, uncertainty, and opportunity. The best ideas will make companies great. Customers, rather than capital, are increasingly the scarcest resources. Market strategy and brands, relationships and innovation are the most significant drivers of economic value.

As organisations, genius is about sensing the best opportunities, then responding in ways that drive short and long-term results. As individuals, genius is about engaging left and right brains to see and think differently, and responding by turning the best, most radical ideas into practical actions, and to inspire people to deliver them.

The genius of business is about seeing the things everyone has seen, but thinking what nobody has thought, engaging the whole brain to turn great ideas into profitable implementation, creating tomorrow whilst delivering today. There has never been a more important time for new “outside in” thinking, or a more exciting time to lead a business.

Genius marketers

Genius Marketers

Marketing Genius explores the attributes of genius, and how the intelligence of Einstein, the creativity of Picasso and success of Buffett can be applied to the marketing challenges of today.

Steve Jobs. The intelligent marketer.

Albert Einstein was a genius, redefining the laws of physics not through his rigorous mathematical derivations, which only resulted in many pages of complex algebra, but through hypothesis and creativity that imagined "what if" and then used his numeric skills to prove that $E=mc^2$. Indeed it was not his rigorous mathematics that enabled him to make sense of nature, but by seeing things differently.

Steve Jobs is the Einstein of today's business world.

He has redefined the marketing of technology, from the early days of Apple's Macintosh to Pixar blockbusters like Toy Story, and back to defining our iLife at Apple. He is a market revolutionary, intelligently making sense of markets, and applying technologies to customer needs.

Jobs grew up in the apricot orchards that later became known as Silicon Valley, at a time when technological innovation and psychedelic music were competing local influences. He studied physics and literature but dropped to found Apple Computer with his friend Steve Wozniak in 1976, based in his parent's garage and financed by the sale of his VW campervan. By the age of 23 he was worth over \$1m, over £10m by 24, \$100m by 25, and now a fully-fledged billionaire.

He grew the business by focusing on niche markets, charging a premium for his novel products. However 1985 saw him lose out in a power struggle with John Sculley as Apple began to struggle with the might of Microsoft. This led him to Pixar animation studios, which has since created five of the most successful and loved animated films since the early days of Walt Disney. From Monsters Inc. to Finding Nemo they have earned more than \$2 billion at the box offices.

Back at Apple Computer, with Steve Jobs reinstalled as leader, Apple recognised that the computing world had changed. In the same way that Pixar had transformed movies, the likes of Dell had disrupted the computing world. But Jobs saw the future differently. He re-engaged his passion for well designed computers, this time with open systems, funky coloured iMacs. More significantly, he recognised that the music industry was in desperate need of innovation. The iPod was born to a new generation of devices, and iTunes closely followed.

Jobs is currently on a high. Apple goes from strength to strength on the back of an relentless stream of iPod innovations, ever smaller and more powerful, combining music and video, and soon to embrace connectivity too. The recent sale of Pixar for almost \$5 billion to Disney, alongside the intriguing prospect of Jobs in the Disney boardroom opens a new chapter in his story.

Jobs takes a deeply personal approach to business – a visionary and strategist, and a hands-on approach to the detail of customer needs and product design. He is a marketer and leader who inspires superlatives. His staff describe him as a "reality distortion field".

Philippe Starck. The imaginative marketer.

Pablo Picasso was a genius, challenging the impressionist conventions of his time. Having patiently absorbed the work of Manet and

Toulouse-Lautrec, he combined his Spanish passion and visual talents to define the new art form of Cubism, and become a rare legend in his own lifetime. We think of him as slightly mad, yet his craziness was built on strong theoretical underpinnings.

Philippe Starck is the Picasso of today's business world

He is the grand fromage of design. From architecture to furniture, utensils to fashion, Starck is currently putting his mark on around 100 products every year. His early work was more akin to fashion and novelty, whilst the turn of the century marked a move to design which has its core in honesty and integrity – from throw-away artefacts to pieces of timeless value.

"Everyone should be pondering, asking themselves questions about life, money, desire, war, themselves" he believes.

Starck's early days were spent underneath his father's drawing boards, playing with paper and glue, taking anything to pieces and rebuilding it, usually in a different way. Remaking the world around him. Clocks, vases, door handles, toothbrushes, watches, food, cutlery lamps, lemon squeezers, desks, motorcycles, taps, baths, toilets. You can wake up to his alarm clock, where his space-age boots, carry his Samsonite luggage, use his discount-price Target accessories, dine at Asia de Cuba restaurant, and sleep in his new classic hotel, The Paramount.

He champions creativity with purpose, art that is practical, insight that is innovative. His collaborations turn average products into practical and essential objects of desire, and can easily triple the profit margins of the brands he works with.

At his drawing board he works with purpose and passion. He touches us through his striking work, and because he thinks without boundary,

rejecting the conventions and challenges of our tolerance, creating objects that are good and beautiful. Later this year he launches the Starck Mouse with Microsoft – with fur and tail, it looks like it will squeek rather than click.

Phil Knight. The profitable marketer.

Warren Buffett is a genius, the offbeat investor who lives in the same £31,000 house he bought in his twenties. Yet his \$36 billion personal fortune, including a third share in Coca Cola, has been achieved by looking for undervalued companies with unfulfilled potential in growth markets.

Phil Knight combines the left-brain of Einstein and right-brain of Picasso.

He markets with a passion. He turned his own athletic frustrations to business, and with an accounting degree he created Nike as a company passionate about sports and profits. For over 30 years he has pushed the boundaries in sporting performance and business results. At the end of 2004 he hung up his CEO shoes, although he remains chairman, handing over a \$12 billion company he built by hand.

Knight's first love was athletics. Whilst studying business administration at the University of Oregon, he trained hard under the guidance of coach Bill Bowerman. However his success was never great, recording a personal best for the mile of 4 minutes 10 seconds.

Frustrated by his lack of sporting success, he sought anything to make a difference, not least his shoes. He scoured the world, and on a trip to Kobe in Japan he discovered Tiger shoes, the forerunner of Asics. He started importing them, selling them at track meets from the back of his van, having now graduated, and started training as

an accountant. In 1972 he decided to go a step further. He paid a friend \$35 to design a swoosh logo, stuck it on his first shoe, "The Cortez", and Nike was born.

By 1979 he had gained 50% of the US running shoe market, at a time when the jogging boom was taking off. He and Bowerman constantly innovated with waffle soles and air cushioning. Through the next two decades, largely through highly creative marketing – the advertising, the endorsements, the "just do it" cult – he turned Nike into the global brand leader, in every sport, in every land. Nike's portfolio now extends to Converse sneakers, Hurley surfwear, and Cole Haan formalwear.

Phil Knight is an intuitive marketer, but also a disciplined accountant. He has been portrayed as mysterious, inscrutable, eccentric, unpredictable, enigmatic, idiosyncratic, shy, aloof, reclusive, competitive and a genius. He shuns publicity although is never far from his desk – or the gym – at Nike Campus. However his passion continues in his products and his people, as well as making Nike one of the most profitable and respected companies in the world.

"Genius" is the one attribute on the list that Knight himself questions. "Other than that, I'm all of those things, at least some of the time". However surely a genius is far too intelligent to call himself such a thing.

Inspired marketers

Genius marketing is only achievable if marketers have the confidence and capabilities, ambition and inspiration to make it happen. These marketers need to be able to raise themselves, their thinking and doing, in order to exploit the complex markets intelligently, rather than be subservient to them, to develop insightful brands rather

than settle for the mainstream, functionalised sameness. What we all hate.

Inspired marketers

- See what everybody has seen
...but think what nobody has thought
- Have the same skills and tools
...but do what nobody else has done
- Face identical challenges ...but succeed like nobody has before.

Anybody can achieve this. The Russian scientists were wrong, there is no such thing as a genius gene, Thomas Edison was right, it really is about 99% hard work, guided by a little inspiration. It's the inspiration that matters, be it finding a role model who shows that the extraordinary is possible, the catalyst to push you into doing what you've just never quite got round to doing, or the flash of insight that opens up a whole new stream of thinking

Whatever the source of inspiration, the hard work matters too. It's about recognising that the extremes in the way we work are complementary rather than competitive. There is no such person as a purely left-brain or right-brain person, one who is creative another who is analytical. These are just excuses for what we know best, or have been led to believe matters most.

Genius is about embracing the extremes, and finding positive reinforcement.

It's about combining right and left-brain thinking, so that the creativity enhances the analysis, the intelligence stretches the imagination. It connects the opportunities that come outside-in, with the capabilities that work inside-out. It's about finding the solutions

that deliver more successful results today and tomorrow.

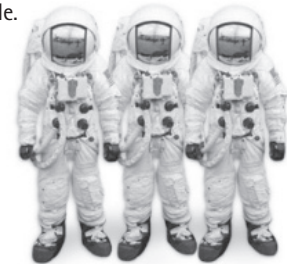
Genius marketers embrace the extremes with curiosity and confidence, with the willingness and talent to combine diverse disciplines as

- The rigours of cashflow analysis and foresight of compelling propositions
- Long-term scenario planning and the realtime integration of communications
- The insights of social anthropology and the disciplines of investor relations
- Logic of regression analysis and the creative disruption to reshape markets
- The inspirational vision and disciplined management to lead a business

Genius marketers are inspired by contradiction, by problems, by paradox, by the unknown, by what doesn't yet make sense.

They are "frontier people" living on the edge between what is perceived to be possible and impossible, between markets and business, between customers and products, between today and tomorrow.

Marketers are the frontier people.



Genius challenges

Genius challenges

1. The Strategy Challenge.

- Shape the future, whilst delivering today. Market and product innovation drive future revenue streams, whilst brands and relationships make them more certain.
- Define the market context, where and how it is to compete amidst blurred boundaries, evolving regulators, and unpredictable change. Market strategy is the starting point.
- Choose where to focus effort amidst the bewildering array of opportunities, as markets and segments fragment, technologies evolve, and ideas proliferate.
- Articulate your competitive difference in a compelling brand proposition, the big idea that cuts through all the noise and imitation, convergence and commoditisation.
- Make better decisions. Few companies have clear business criteria on which to make the right decisions strategically or tactically.

2. The Brand Challenge.

- Harness your brand in all its manifestations to build awareness and reach, trust and affinity. There are lots of names and logos, but few truly great brands emerging today.
- Engage human emotions. Share a passion that matters to your audience, help them define themselves, but recognise you can't be everything to everyone.
- Be authentic and transparent. Whatever you say, you must do.

In today's transparent world, words and actions are closely watched for consistency and delivery.

- Bring coherence and support to brand architectures. Corporate and operational brands, product and ingredient brands must work better together.
- Actively manage your market, brand, and product portfolios, finding and nurturing the value creators, eliminating the value destroyers, not annually but every day.

3. The Customer Challenge

- See your world from where customers stand. Power has shifted from company to customer, from surplus supply to surplus demand. Do business on their terms.
- Target with precision. Customers are more different and individual than ever. Segmentation is complex, needs and behaviours change, targeting is hard.
- Work out what kind of relationships you really want. Satisfaction is expected. Loyalty is rare. Customers are promiscuous. Few really want a relationship with you.
- Tap into passion networks. Consumers don't care about products, they care about themselves – babies, sports, work – helping to build new communities.
- Make privacy a positive. Communication overload has created of backlash in use of personal information. Permission is the start to a dialogue a customer actually wants.

4. The Communications Challenge

- Communicate on customer terms. Campaigns are done by companies promoting what they want when they want. Customers don't buy them anymore.

- Capture disparate customer bases. Broadcast media proliferation has driven audience fragmentation. Customisable and interactive. Complex and expensive.
- Sell the benefits clearly. Clear and compelling value propositions must be about customers not you. Targeted and tailored, rather than generic to everyone.
- Apply impartial logic to creativity. Marketers are still obsessed with ads. It's a brave person not to do them. Be more open minded about which media, and what leads.
- Find new ways to work with creative agencies. Agencies should work together serving clients, compensated for quality of ideas, more than their implementation.

5. The Channel Challenge

- Innovate your routes to market. Channels were not sexy. Warehouses and transport. Technology changed that, and channels are now ripe for innovation
- Differentiate through distribution. Channel models are changing with intermediaries needing to add more value, elaborating the customers' experience.
- Design your own channels. Don't rely upon others. Multi-channel solutions create customer choice and convenience, even better if they fuse the best bits together.
- Innovate the business model. How the business works with others, and makes money, can be significantly innovated for market and financial impact
- Embrace new technologies in innovative ways. Digital formats are still emergent, and can do much more to improve efficiency and the customer experience.

6. The Pricing Challenge

- Add more value to customers, and charge them more for it. Changing the peer group, the customer context to judge value is one way. Clarify who manages price.
- Get into customer heads. The perceived value of benefits relative to competitors is in the buyer's mind. Improve the benefits, change the competitive context.
- Price comparison is easy. Prices can be compared online between suppliers and markets. Price becomes a tactical weapon, although discounting reduces margins.
- Avoid discounting gimmicks. Seek to incentivise trial and change behaviour. Yet coupons only appeal to discount seekers, and create expectations for the future.
- Rethink the whole idea of loyalty. Loyalty points are fun, but also quite meaningless. Compare a "2 for 1" grocery offer to the 1-2% discount they offer.

7. The Innovation Challenge

- Drive innovation in every part of the business, within products but much more too. Innovation is creative problem solving, with commercial results.
- Innovate beyond the product launch – innovate the market, the application, the channel and whole customer experience, and continue to do so over the lifecycle.
- Don't use research like a drunk uses a lamppost. Good research stimulates ideas, rather than fuelling prejudice. Everything from anthropology to econometric modelling.
- Embrace the power of design in every aspect of business. One of the biggest emotional engagers, yet seen as superficial

packaging or an after-thought.

- Champion the total customer experience. Products are quickly copied. Experiences are much harder to copy, but also take much more effort to make happen.

8. The Performance Challenge

- Engage the city analysts in market thinking. Investors look to the long-term, where cash will come from in future years. Relationships, brands and innovation.
- Businesses create long-term value for shareholders through capital growth and dividends. Capital growth depends on investor perceptions, so manage it actively.
- Understand where the money is really made. Profits help, particularly if they exceed investor expectations. It is easy to destroy as much economic value as you create.
- Don't rush to delight the customer. Customer satisfaction scores are important, like hygiene, but they are no guarantee of loyalty or profitability.
- Find the key measures of success. Lots of data, but few measure the right things. Few connect inputs and outputs, and understand the most important drivers of value.

9. The People Challenge

- Get customer and market thinking into the boardroom, and on the dashboard. Execs have a low customer IQ. Strategy and decision-making needs "outside in" thinking.
- Approach markets horizontally not vertically. Sales, marketing and customer service, and every other part of the business, all deliver the customer experience.

THE LITTLE BOOK OF MARKETING GENIUS

- Make market thinking strategic and commercial. Make customer value the only route to shareholder value, and drive prioritised actions that create both sustainably.
- Market-thinking managers need the leadership skills to drive strategy, the innovation skills to catalyse the future, and the commercial skills to prove it works.
- Businesses need creative leadership. Management is about making the right decisions, leadership is about inspiring action. Both matter, not easy to be both.

10. The Implementation Challenge

- Leapfrog your way to market. Connect your brand with another already loved by a target audience, fuse the values and value of both through affinity programmes.
- Learn to influence customers with permission and without intrusion. Create the background presence – to build awareness and shape preferences. Reputation is key.
- Help customers make sense of the world. With limited time, consumers don't want to be experts, or to work hard, they want advice, support on what is best for them.
- Be a guerrilla. Usurp the conventions. Surprise challenge your competitors, such as ambushing the sponsorship of an event, can have big impact at little cost.
- Use networks. Be it word of mouth, or email to friends, virality is still the best form of marketing around. Networks have infinite value, and grow exponentially.

The making of a marketing genius

The making of a marketing genius

Why I wrote the book

I want to inspire you to think differently, and to do great marketing.

In recent years I have experienced some great marketing, alongside much mediocrity. I have met many stimulating and ambitious marketers, but also many others who lack the confidence to challenge the status quo, to make their great ideas happen, to seize the opportunity to lead their organisations.

I want marketing to succeed, to be the driving force of business, and to have the influence and respect as a profession that it deserves.

Marketing creates more economic value for business than any other activity, yet it is too often seen as a marginal activity, a support function, and a tactical cost line. Marketing has an unmatched power base from which to drive the business – understanding the market, championing the customer, leading innovation, building the brand, driving profitable growth.

This requires a more strategic and commercial, but also a more innovative and engaging approach. Marketers must embrace the analytical rigour to connect passions with profits, but they must not lose their creative spark to reach out for what is new and different. Too many businesses, and their marketers, have become blinkered servants to process and numbers, which alone are increasingly

commoditised and outsourced capabilities.

In today's incredibly complicated world, every business faces enormous change, uncertainty, and opportunity. The best ideas will make companies great. Customers, rather than capital, are increasingly the scarcest resources. Sales automation and knowledge management, process efficiency and risk aversion will reduce organisations to sameness. The diversity of people, the nurturing of ideas, and strength of personal relationships will make the difference.

Marketers have the unique talents to address today's intelligent and demanding customer, to bring direction and focus to their organisation, and to drive the future profits that sustain business success.

What will you learn?

Imagine if you could see the emerging opportunities in your markets as well as Apple's Steve Jobs, address them with the vision of Jeff Bezos at Amazon, the leadership of eBay CEO Meg Whitman, and the commercial success of Nike's founder Phil Knight.

Imagine if you could transform your industry with the direction of Michael Dell, innovation of James Dyson and persistence of low-cost airline king, Michael O'Leary. Imagine if you could build powerful brands like Scott Bedbury did for Starbucks and Nike, with the irreverence of Jones Soda founder Peter van Stolk, and creativity of advertising's enfant terrible Trevor Beattie.

Imagine if you could deliver experiences with the aesthetics of iPod designer Jonathon Ive, passion of sandwich entrepreneur Julian Metcalfe, and effectiveness of P&G's top marketer, Jim Stengel.

Marketing Genius describes how you can do all of this:

- Make sense of today's complex and changing markets, and distinguish the hot spots, white spaces, and black holes.
- Become the driving force of your business strategy, identifying new sources of competitive advantage
- Bring an outside in approach to your whole business, and align the expectations of customers and shareholders.
- Balance delivering today with the need to create tomorrow, by gaining new insights into what really matters to customers
- Build strong brands that engage and inspire people, which also embrace a new level of ethical and social responsibility
- Innovate products, markets and business models more radically, by harnessing technology and design in creative and unusual ways
- Articulate customer propositions that are distinctive and compelling, and ensure that your communication is contagious and unforgettable
- Connect with customers on their terms, in more knowledgeable and integrated ways, when, where and how they want
- Serve customers in more personal, empathetic and human ways, delivering experiences that are compelling and enabling
- Measure your marketing with accurate and actionable measures, optimising your budgets and resources for a better return.
- Unlock the real economic value of your marketing, and realise your own potential as a marketer

Every marketer has the ability to achieve "genius", to combine your intelligence and imagination, to think more strategically and act more effectively, and to do what you might never otherwise have thought possible.

How will it help you?

I hope that Marketing Genius gives you the confidence to do marketing that is more strategic, innovative and commercial.

Whilst I have included many concepts, case studies and tools to help you, this is not an exhaustive guide to marketing, or a replacement for all the excellent theoretical texts.

Instead I seek to provoke your thinking, to illustrate connections, to highlight dilemmas, to suggest alternatives, and to stimulate more thoughtful yet radical action, that delivers improved business results.

I hope it encourages you to see your market and business more holistically, to challenge conventions both outside and inside, and to remove the fear of areas of business that you perhaps understand less well.

Over the years, and in the researching this book, I have become convinced that

- Markets, complex and fast changing, competitive and borderless, are the best sources of opportunities for business today. They should be the stimulus and driving force of business purpose and direction, priorities and alignment.
- Marketing is the most important and exciting activity in business. It offers an essential mindset for everyone, particularly business leaders, and is the engine of strategy and brands, experiences and relationships, innovation and growth.
- Marketers are more valuable to their organisations than ever. They bring an outside-in perspective, with the ability to think creatively and analytically, strategically and practically,

THE LITTLE BOOK OF MARKETING GENIUS

creatively and commercially.

If we can achieve recognition of this through practical actions and results, then marketing will be a profession that we can all be proud of - respected by peers, valued by society, aspired to by the best young talent, and the breeding ground of future CEOs.

Marketing is the key to delivering extraordinary business results.

You have the talent and opportunity to apply the intelligence of Einstein and the imagination of Picasso, to make sense of markets and stand out from the crowd, and to deliver results that even Warren Buffett would be proud of.

You could be a marketing genius, if you want.

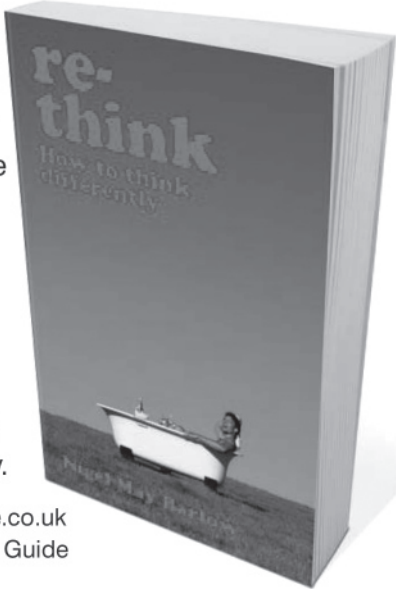
I will never forget the inspirational words that I learnt in my early days of marketing. "Whatever you can do, or think you can do, begin it. For boldness has power, genius and magic in it."

Be innovative. Be different. Be inspired.

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PRAISE FOR MARKETING GENIUS

"A fantastic book, full of relevant learning. The mass market is dead. The consumer is boss. Imagination, intuition and inspiration reign. Geniuses wanted."

Kevin Roberts, Worldwide CEO Saatchi Et Saatchi,
and author of Lovemarks

"Marketers who want to recharge their left and right brains can do no better than read Marketing Genius. It's all there: concepts, tools, companies and stories of inspired marketers."

Professor Philip Kotler, Kellogg Graduate School of Management,
and author of Marketing Management

"This is a truly prodigious book. Peter Fisk is experienced, urbane and creative, all the attributes one would expect from a top marketer. The case histories in this book are inspirational and Peter's writing style is engaging and very much to the point. This book deserves a special place in the substantial library of books on marketing."

Professor Malcolm McDonald, Cranfield School of Management,
and author of Marketing Plans

"Marketing Genius offers marketers 99% inspiration for only 10% perspiration."

Hugh Burkitt, CEO, The Marketing Society

"This is a clever book: it tells you all the things you need to think, know and do to make money from customers and then calls you a genius for reading it."

Hamish Pringle, Director General of Institute of Practitioners in Advertising,
and author of Celebrity Sells

"Customers, brands and marketing should sit at the heart of every business's strategy and performance today. Marketing Genius explains why this matters more than ever, and how to achieve it for business and personal success"

Professor John Quelch, Professor of Business Administration
at Harvard Business School and author of New Global Brands

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