

BRAND HIJACK

Marketing Without Marketing

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ALEX WIPPERFURTH is a partner at Plan B, a marketing consultancy firm based in San Francisco. Plan B specializes in grassroots marketing programs and has been used by Pabst Blue Ribbon, Napster, Dr. Martens, Barbie and other brand owners. The whole essence of the Plan B approach is to build buzz and develop a cult following which will make the brand appear cool without expensive advertising.

The Plan B Web site is at www.plan-b.biz.

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MAIN IDEA

Companies like Starbucks, eBay, Palm and Red Bull have built multi-billion-dollar valuations without using any conventional advertising campaigns. Far from being lucky breaks, the success of these and other companies demonstrate the smart approach to building a business and a brand in the twenty-first-century is to do what can be termed “marketing without marketing”.

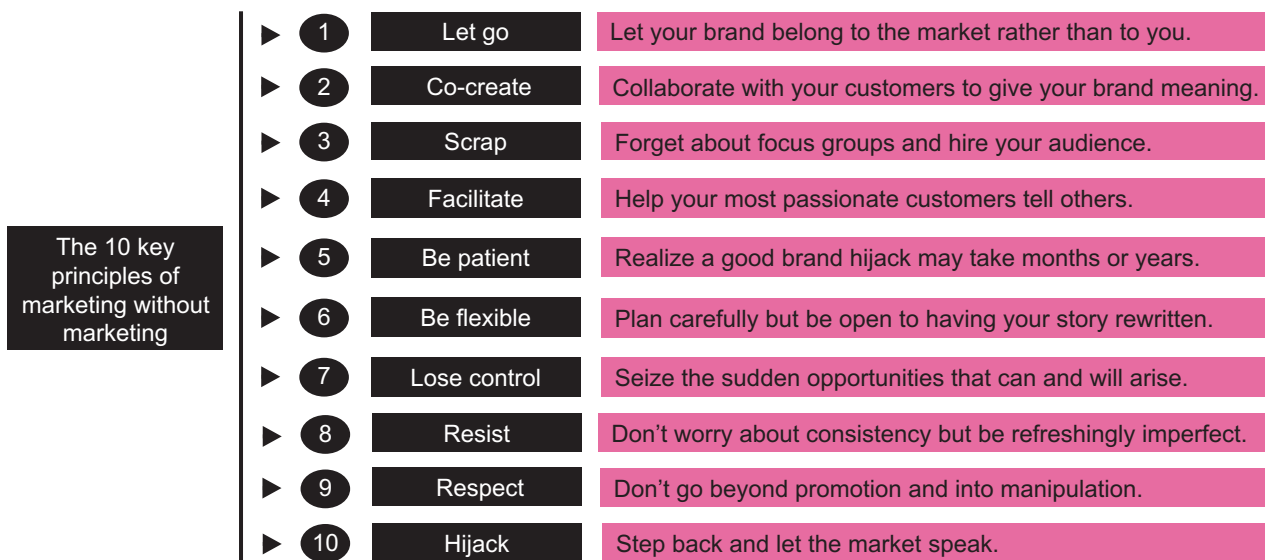
More specifically, these brands create the illusion that success is happening serendipitously as driven by the users rather than as dictated by the corporation. This is good, because it means the user base feels like they’re in control of the brand. Consumers who instantly and automatically reject traditional marketing as being too intrusive respond well to the invitation to help shape what their favorite brand will mean in the future. This is the essence of marketing without marketing.

The key to building a brand nowadays is to let the market hijack your brand. The more marketplace involvement you have, the better – even if that takes your brand off in unanticipated directions. What you’ll ultimately end up with is a brand experience which is richer, better, more genuine and therefore more sustainable than anything you would have consciously developed yourself. Have the confidence to let the market decide how your brand evolves.

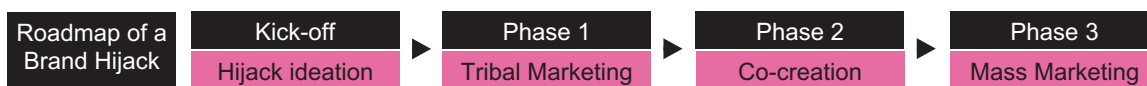
“Welcome to marketing without marketing: the emergence of the hijacked brand. Don’t let the all-too-clever subtitle fool you. Far from representing the absence of marketing, this approach is the most complex sort of marketing possible, as well as the least understood. Brand Hijack addresses such advertising industry crises as media saturation, consumer evolution, and the erosion of image marketing. This type of marketing is not for everyone. You must be willing to let the market take over. You must be confident enough to stop clamoring for control and learn to be spontaneous. You must be bold enough to accept a certain degree of uncertainty in the handling of your brands.”

– Alex Wipperfurth

1. The 10 key principles of marketing without marketing. Pages 2 - 6



2. How to do marketing without marketing Pages 7 - 8



To pull off a successful brand hijack, you’ll need to do four different things well:

1. *Find a great idea* – one that has the potential to grow over time into a new cultural norm that will deliver practical and tangible benefits over accepted practice.
2. *Nurture your early market* – by encouraging some consumer tribes to incorporate the new idea into their thinking. Select an early market that will be influential and then let the idea start to grow from that base.
3. *Enlist your early market to help you co-create the buzz that will gain the attention of the mass market* – which your early market will be willing to do voluntarily and enthusiastically if you’ve laid a good foundation.
4. *Once you’re acknowledged as “the next big thing”, then work to help the mass market adopt you* – using conventional marketing methods which will build momentum and broaden awareness.

Some of these activities are above-the-radar and openly visible, but others will be below-the-radar and require some stealth thinking, planning and execution to succeed.

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