

WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

Marketing Lessons I've Learned from over
80,000 New-Product Innovations and Idiocies

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MAIN IDEA

Companies throw away millions of dollars unnecessarily by repeating their marketing mistakes of the past over and over. By studying what has and has not worked in the past, marketers can significantly improve their chances of success. This common sense approach to marketing suggests that if a marketer is ignorant of the mistakes of the past, he is likely to repeat them again, losing a lot of money in the process. By contrast, if a marketer tries to emulate the success of previously successful products, there is a lot of money to be made.

New products only succeed when everything that has to go right does actually go right. That is a tough assignment in the real world, but marketers can increase their chances for success by being realistic, by examining product concepts rigorously right at their inception, by questioning their assumptions as they develop them and by remaining flexible enough to make adjustments and corrections as snags and hitches are encountered.

<u>1. Marketing Hot Buttons for Success in the Millennium</u>	Page 2
Products that will excel in the next millennium will be those that meet or exceed customer needs in the following areas:	
1. Greater convenience	
2. Environmentally sound	
3. Ethnically diverse	
4. Fun	
5. Nutritional	
6. Packaging	
7. Size	
8. Youth	
<u>2. Me-Too Marketing and Product Line Extensions</u>	Page 3
Me-too marketing -- selling a product or service that is nothing more than a blatant copy of something else -- almost always ends up in failure. A more productive approach is to create a new and innovative product that actually fills a need.	
<u>3. Avoiding Corporate Alzheimer's Disease</u>	Page 4
New products must be developed against a historical perspective of what has already succeeded and failed. Particularly the failures. Until you understand why a new product concept failed in the marketplace yesterday, the odds are good that you'll make the same mistakes again tomorrow.	
<u>4. New Product Innovation</u>	Page 4
The more new products marketers develop, the less innovative they seem to be.	
<u>5. Communicating and Concentrating</u>	Page 5
Marketing success dictates that you never assume customers know why or how they should use your product. You have to be extremely explicit in communicating these features to consumers, particularly when introducing concentrated products.	
<u>6. Fooling With Your Cash Cow</u>	Page 5
Successful companies rarely seem to be able to resist the urge to tinker with whatever generates the bulk of their revenues -- usually resulting in lower and lower sales.	
<u>7. Image -- Even if it's Anti-image -- Is Everything</u>	Page 6
From a marketing perspective, image is everything -- even if the image is that "Image is nothing".	
<u>8. Trend or Fad?</u>	Page 6
Telling the difference between trends and fads can be tricky in marketing matters. The critical difference? Trends are long-term, fads are short-term.	
<u>9. The Proof of the Pudding is in the Eating</u>	Page 7
Having a strong distribution channel is important. A large advertising budget is a great help. A clever brand name is a plus. But, "You won't sell a thing if your product or service ain't got that zing".	
<u>10. Question: Who are Our Target Customers?</u>	Page 7
Marketers typically ask: "What is our target market?" That's the wrong question. Always start with the question: "Who are our target customers?"	
<u>11. Significant Points of Difference</u>	Page 8
A significant point of difference from competing brands is essential in launching a new product. It is the one key benefit that you can really hype.	
<u>12. Thou Shalt Not Deceive</u>	Page 8
One of the cardinal rules of marketing success is to never promise whatever you can't or won't deliver.	

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