



Why Simple Works

by Danny Brown

www.dannybrown.me

Copyright (c) 2010 Danny Brown



Why Does Simple Work?

Marketing and business ideas can be overloaded with so many facts that none of them actually stick.

Sometimes the simplest of ideas work. Not always, but more often than you might expect.

Letting the point speak for itself can be easier for marketers to create and customers to consume and retain.

This ebook offers reasons why simple might work for you.

Thanks for reading,

Danny.



Quality Assurance

You have a new product. You need to test it before it goes public. You hire an agency to carry out a focus group for you. You pay people to tell you what, essentially, you want to hear (many focus group participants won't be completely honest since they want repeat invitations).

You've just spent five figures to find out just a tiny bit more than you knew before about your product.

Now. You have a new product. You need to test it before it goes public. You give it to your sales people; your marketing people; your customer service people. You know - the ones who have to live with its real value from the front line.

Who do you think will offer the *real* feedback?



Universal

Ideas begin with one person, but the best ones are chewed over by many before being released to the public.

There's a reason for this. Personal bias and parental protection often makes us myopic about letting go, and this can make us miss the bigger picture. Afterward, we realize our good idea became great because of universal viewpoints.

Something to keep in mind the next time you're about to tell someone they're too junior to offer an input into your business master plan.



Reinventing the Wheel

James Dyson looked at the vacuum cleaner and gave people a different way to do things - no bags. Simple.

EasyJet looked at international flights and gave people a different way to fly - no thrills affordability. Simple.

Sony looked at video games and gave people a different way to view gamers - cool mass appeal chic. Simple.

We don't always have to build something brand new. We don't always have to spend millions on research when the audience is already there. We don't always have to create from scratch.

Sometimes just reinventing the wheel is more than enough.



Do Not Disturb

Your voicemail is permanently on (or your secretary is diverting calls). Your office is a no-go area except to the limited few. Your cell phone has dedicated ringtones so only three people get through (and they're all "Yes" people).

You're permanently in meetings that you've arranged that don't need to happen - the earth won't fall away if you miss one of them. Simply put, you're so busy that your life is one big "Do Not Disturb" sign.

Your competitors, on the other hand, *like* to be disturbed. They *like* new ideas from the many. They *like* phone calls; emails; faxes. They *like* meetings that only happen when.. well, when something happens or needs to.

In short, your competitors are busy being disturbed by customers. Isn't it about time you unlocked some doors?



Belief Systems

When George Lucas made Star Wars, he waived his director's fee in exchange for licensing rights. Despite most studios turning down his movie idea, Lucas believed in it and was willing to put his money where his mouth was.

Twentieth Century Fox agreed to the deal, believing that movie merchandise wasn't a big selling point. Star Wars went on to become one of the most successful movies ever, and the toys, video games, soundtracks and other merchandise made Lucas millions.

While you might not be George Lucas, there's no reason why you can't make your own blockbuster. All you need is belief.



One Size Fits All

Marketing to a law firm is very different to marketing to a butcher's shop.

Implementing social media strategy for a school is not the same as implementing social media strategy for a school for spine surgeons.

Flying a kite is not the same as flying a three hundred passenger Boeing.

One size fits all solutions?

No such thing.



Leaders Don't Just Lead

If you're considered a leader, what type of leader are you?

Do you lead from the front and refuse to ask those under your guidance to do anything you wouldn't yourself? Do you hang back in the shadows and delegate from afar? Do you have lieutenants under you that carry out your work for you, and you just sign off the paperwork?

Your troops are your front line of defense. This could be a sales team; a customer service team; a tech support team; or commenters on your blog. They can tell you what's happening every day. They can see changes you miss in the ivory towers of leadership. They can be the eyes that see new opportunities and best practices.

Leaders - **true leaders** - don't just lead; they're led as well. If you're considered a leader, what type of leader are you?



Old and New

Old often equates to age, and wisdom. Old shows staying power and stamina, and hard battles fought and won.

New often equates to eagerness, and a willingness to experiment. New shows paths yet to be journeyed and successes to come.

Mix old and new and you have the wisdom to journey the right paths. The staying power to battle to success.

Old and new are two different words but they don't need to be two different worlds.



Friends and Family

When you're down on your luck, who do you turn to? When you want honest advice and ways to make things right, who do you turn to? When you need to get rid of all the BS and be the person you need to be, who do you turn to?

I'm guessing friends and family. Those you *trust*. Those you've grown with; feel comfort around; know only have your best interests at heart.

Now. Imagine if your customers were your friends and family. Imagine the trust you could build. Imagine the belief in each other. Imagine the greatness you could create together.

Imagine the potential.

Ready to make new, true friends?



Bedside Manners

The best doctors are successful because they have immaculate bedside manners. Some of the traits of great bedside manners include:

Being a good listener.

Using easy-to-understand terminology.

Caring about their patient's concerns.

Respectful of their patient's time.

These traits are second nature to good doctors. Maybe more business owners should go to medical school.



Give to Get

Giving up is easy. Close our eyes, wait for problems to go away - anyone can do that. The highway of life is full of sleepers and short stay hotels of those that have given up.

Getting back up? That's the difficult part. But think how many times you've been ready to give up in the past, only to keep getting back in the game for more.

No-one likes giving up, but sometimes it's the only natural thing to do. How, and if, you get up is the separator.

Ready to get?



Clock Watching

Tick tock. The sound of a clock. The sound of watching the minutes go by.
The sound of boredom. The sound of anywhere but here.

Silence. The sound of creativity at work. The sound of not really feeling like
a job. The sound of expressing yourself. The sound of making things
happen the way *you* want them to.

The sound of *success*.

You're not encouraging clock watching, are you?



Instant Coffee

Instant coffee is fast. Instant coffee offers the quick solution you need at that time. Instant coffee keeps you satisfied until you can get to the gourmet roast or Colombian dark coffee from your favourite bean.

As customers, we love full bean flavour but we don't always need that - sometimes all we need to keep us happy is some instant coffee.

How's your business at serving coffee?



Bridge Builders

You don't have to be a superstar. You don't have to be the top dog. You don't always have to be the number one.

It helps. It can offer kudos and credence to your name. But superstars fade. Top dogs become old. Number ones can fall by the wayside.

Stop solely concentrating on the numbers and positions. Instead, think about being a bridge builder.

We're in a people business. Yes, people work from numbers but they **really** believe in the connection. You're the bridge to that connection. The decisions you're making today are being viewed by others, and they *will* come to you for their needs.

Build the bridge right and the numbers will follow.



Be Fearless

Be fearless. Be bold. Be new. Be exciting. Be inspired. Be passionate. Be different. Be crazy.

The world is full of normality but who wants to stop at the world?

Be fearless.

Be *you*.



Impossible Possibilities

600 years ago we thought the earth was flat. Just over 100 years ago we thought it was impossible for man to fly. Just over 50 years ago we still thought that steam powered was the way to travel by train. 40 years ago we hadn't put a man on the moon.

Every day we're faced with impossibilities. We're told, "You can't do that; it'll never work."

But you know... an impossibility is simply a problem that we haven't conquered yet.

Consider that as you next commute to work on your electric train.



Influence the Evangelists

You're responsible for a blogger outreach program. Who do you go for - the influencers? Is this the right approach? Why aren't you reaching for the evangelists?

Influencers take a paycheck (or some from of payment) to talk about you. They don't always have a vested interest in your brand. They won't necessarily tell you where to improve.

Evangelists don't need a paycheck. By all means, give them first shot at your new goodies, but payment? Not their style. They have a vested interest in your brand. They want to see you be the best, so they'll tell you what you're doing wrong and where you can improve.

Influencers are for the now. Evangelists are for the now and *after now*. Still want to reach the influencers?



Real People

ATM's are automated, but you need to deal with a real person to buy a house.

Phone trees are automated but you need to deal with a real person to resolve a complaint.

Production lines are automated but you need a real person to sign the shipment papers.

Our processes may be becoming more automated, but we still need real people to initiate the process. Is your business recognizing *your* real people every day?



Complaining Cleverly

If approached properly, a complaint can turn into a discussion can turn into a process improvement can turn into a case study. Everybody wins.

Are you being clever with complaints?



The Business of Dating

Dating is a tricky business. Building up the courage to ask someone out; the nerves of the first date; the choices that you make deciding whether you'll have a second date or not; and keeping conversation flowing being just some of the hazards.

Then you have to worry about the success of the second date. And the third. And so on. Then (if you're lucky) it becomes a relationship and you can begin making long-term plans together.

Are you treating your customers like a date? Are you keeping the conversation flowing and making the right choices to keep them interested in you? How are you building the long-term relationships with them?

Dating is a tricky business. How successful are you in the dating game?



Brand versus Reputation

Your brand is what you make it. Your reputation is what makes you.
There's a small difference in wording but a big difference in overview.

Brand may get you the initial success; reputation is what keeps it going.



Building Forts

Forts were built for a reason - to keep invaders out. Yet if the invaders came with numbers prepared for a siege, forts also left you trapped inside, unable to make your escape until you either surrendered or died from starvation.

When you're building your business, you may be looking at your growing empire as your own personal fort, keeping you safe from competitors. Just make sure you don't get barricaded in and trapped from innovation by being *too* protected from your competitors.

Innovation comes from awareness. Awareness comes from seeing what's going on around you. Can you see past the walls of *your* fort?



Numbers

Most people have probably heard the story of how Jesus fed 5,000 people with just five fish and two loaves of bread. It's one of the most popular tales from the Bible and whether you're religious or not, it's likely you've heard it.

What does it tell us? That success isn't dictated by numbers. You can have the biggest company and satisfy the fewest people. You can have the smallest company and satisfy every single customer, every day.

Numbers aren't the important thing. It's what you do with the numbers that is. You might be a solitary fish in the sea, but you can still satisfy 1,000 people.



Simple

If someone tells you that you want something, do you listen? Or do you ignore and think that only you know what you want?

If someone *asks* what you want, do you tell them your ideas and wish-lists? More than likely. We all like to be heard.

So why are you telling your customers what they want? Why are you not asking them? Instead of saying, "Hey, this is our new product, it's just what you've wanted", why not say, "Here's the product you asked for"?

Or is that too simple?



Love

Love is fleeting. Love can come and go. Love can be betrayed. Love can be consuming and powerful. Love is everything.

When was the last time you loved your customers? Your clients? Your employees?

Offer them your love. ***Unconditionally.***

You never know how much love you'll get in return, but you may be pleasantly surprised.



Threshold

The best strategies have an exit plan. These are the thresholds that say, "Okay, we tried but it's not working."

Can you adapt something that isn't working? Did you plan for all eventualities? Do you have an exit strategy?

If so, what's your threshold?



Auto-Pilot

Being on auto-pilot is just the same as switching off your senses and letting the machinery take over.

You miss the real things that are happening, the real stories, the real people.

Fine if you're a machine, but as a human being?

Auto-pilot is life's blindfold.



Voices

All of us are just one person, yet we use many voices every day.

You control these voices and how they're used. You control whether they're used positively or negatively. You control whether they garner fear or respect. You control whether you help change the world or accept the status quo. Your control defines the perception of you by others.

We may have numerous voices, but at the end of the day there's only one that truly counts.

What's *your* voice?



Satisfaction Levels

Businesses spend so much time getting their brand right; their marketing; their PR; their sales; their online strategy. But you know what?

None of this means a thing without customers. And customers do ***not*** want to feel second-rate. Strange but true - satisfy your customers and you'll satisfy your shareholders and accountants.

How's ***your*** satisfaction level holding up?



Choices

Do we need so much choice all the time? Do your customers, your blog visitors, your newspaper readers, your immediate connections need that amount of choice? They come to you for a reason - should you potentially dilute that reason with too much choice?

Sometimes we say better things when we don't say anything at all. Other times small voices make the biggest noise. What choices would you prefer?



New Blood

Some of the brightest voices are being unheard because of the way you think. Industries are changing and new blood is heading the rush. Instead of trying to hold that back, embrace it.

Change is all around us. Are you keeping up?



Why Simple Works

About the author:

Danny Brown has been providing [business branding and emerging media](#) consultancy services to the consumer and commercial markets for more than 15 years, from small start-ups to Fortune 500 businesses.



Danny is also the founder of the [12for12k Challenge](#), a unique charity project using social media to connect globally and help locally.

Find Danny Brown online:

Blog: www.dannybrown.me

Twitter: @DannyBrown

Copyright: Cover image [Catalina Rusu](#). The thoughts in this ebook were originally inspired by the Posterous blogging platform. You are free to download, share and embed this ebook. Any quotes or passages you use must be attributed back to the author.