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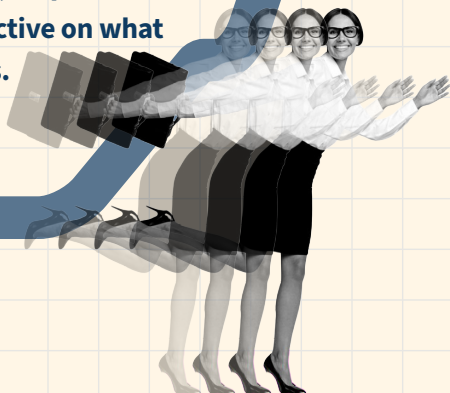
RESULTS

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MARKETING MOVES FAST

Platforms change, algorithms shift and trends come and go. But the principles that drive real results? Those are worth holding onto.

Inside, you'll find 50 modern marketing principles designed for a world where AI meets authenticity, data meets creativity and strategy meets speed. Keep these insights close when you need direction, inspiration or a fresh perspective on what actually works.



MARKETING THAT WORKS AS HARD AS YOU DO

When we started Responsory in 1999, the goal was simple: deliver measurable, multichannel marketing that drives real results. The world has changed dramatically since our last edition of this tiny book. AI has arrived. Privacy laws have reshaped data practices. Short-form video dominates attention. Yet the fundamentals remain: know your audience, test your approach, measure your results and stay human.

On the following pages, I share principles that will lead you down the right path to measurable, ethical, high-performance marketing as you move into the future.



Grant Johnson
CEO, RESPONSORY

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RESPNSORY



Dedicated to all our client partners who provide us the opportunities to test and measure the success of their campaigns and to the Responsory staff who use these tips along with their expertise to make those campaigns successful.

MARKETING FOUNDATIONS

The non-negotiables that never go out of style.

#01

START WITH REAL CUSTOMER INSIGHT



Great marketing begins with deep understanding of needs, motivations, anxieties and behaviors. Go beyond demographics to understand the “why” behind customer actions. Use interviews, surveys, behavioral data and social listening to build true empathy for the people you serve.

#02

BUILD SEGMENTS WITH DATA AND RESPECT PRIVACY



Modern segmentation uses AI-powered analytics, behavioral patterns and predictive modeling. But you must earn consent and protect trust. Zero-party data (information people intentionally share) combined with first-party data help you create segments that are both precise and privacy-compliant. GDPR, CCPA and similar regulations aren't obstacles—they're opportunities to differentiate through transparency.

#03

TEST RELENTLESSLY AND MEASURE WHAT MATTERS



If you're competing against true measurable marketers, they will be testing and retesting both messages and markets. Experimentation through A/B tests, multivariate testing and incrementality studies helps drive growth.

Rather than focusing on vanity metrics like impressions or follower counts, prioritize metrics that actually matter to your business: customer lifetime value, conversion rates, retention and ROI.

#04

DESIGN FOR THE ENTIRE CUSTOMER JOURNEY



Success is rarely achieved in one touch, so map the full journey from awareness through advocacy. Understand that people need different messages at different stages. Design touchpoints for every stage. Someone just learning about a problem needs education while someone ready to buy needs confidence and clarity.

#05

PERSONALIZE WITHOUT BEING CREEPY



Modern marketing automation and AI enable 1:1 personalization across thousands of customers. Show relevance while respecting boundaries. If your personalization makes someone say, "how did they know that?" you've gone too far. Aim for "this is exactly what I needed."

#06

USE CLEAR VALUE EXCHANGES



People engage when you offer something meaningful like utility, insight, entertainment or access. Want their email address? Give them something worth trading for. Want their time? Make your content valuable. The days of gated white papers with generic content are over.

#07

MAKE ACCESSIBILITY NON-NEGOTIABLE



While accessible content is increasingly a legal requirement, it also expands your reach and demonstrates respect for all users. Use alt text for images, captions for video, proper color contrast, keyboard navigation and clear hierarchy. Build it in from the start, not as an afterthought.

#08

LEAD WITH SIMPLICITY



Clarity converts, so remove friction everywhere. Every extra field in a form, every unclear call-to-action, every moment of confusion costs you results.

Ask: *“What can we remove?”* as often as you ask, *“What should we add?”*



PROMPT



What foundational practices could strengthen your marketing right now?

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines.

BRAND & EXPERIENCE

How to build a brand people actually care about.

#09

BUILD A BRAND PEOPLE FEEL



Your brand is not your logo, tagline or color scheme. It's your customers' perception and the expectations they derive from it. Make people feel something—trust, excitement, belonging—and they'll remember you.

#10

CONSISTENCY CREATES TRUST



Use distinctive brand assets, tone and behaviors across every channel (think McDonald's golden arches or Nike's swoosh). But consistency isn't rigidity. It's about maintaining your essence while adapting your expression to different contexts and platforms.

#11

DEFINE A CLEAR POSITION IN THE MARKET



Be known for something ownable, valuable and hard to copy. Your brand positioning determines how you'll compete. If you listed out all your competitors' marketing messages, would you be able to differentiate your own? If not, it's time to sharpen your positioning.

#12

FUSE BRAND AND PERFORMANCE



The false choice between “brand building” and “performance marketing” wastes money. In reality, they work better together. Brand lifts response while performance converts. For maximum impact, every brand campaign should have measurable outcomes, and every performance campaign should reinforce brand positioning.

#13

CRAFT EXPERIENCES THAT DELIGHT



The best brands don't just deliver a sound product or service, they deliver incredible experiences. People remember how you make them feel. Design every touchpoint intentionally: packaging, customer service, website navigation, email tone, everything.

#14

DESIGN FOR SCROLL BEHAVIOR



People don't read online; they scan. With only three seconds to capture attention on social media and maybe ten on a website, your design must prioritize fast comprehension, bold visuals, clear CTAs and a mobile-first approach. Design accordingly with a strong visual hierarchy and concise messaging.

#15

BUILD COMMUNITY, NOT JUST CONTENT



Brands that cultivate belonging earn advocacy and retention. Create spaces where customers connect with each other, not just with your brand. Discord servers, Slack communities, Facebook Groups or branded forums foster deeper loyalty than broadcasting to passive followers.

#16

LET PURPOSE GUIDE BEHAVIOR



Modern consumers, especially younger demographics, expect brands to stand for something beyond profit. Purpose is a compass for decisions, not a tagline. Authentic commitment to social, environmental or community causes builds deeper loyalty. But be warned: purpose-washing or virtue signaling may backfire.

PROMPT

Where can your brand create more meaning or emotional connection?

DIRECT RESPONSE & ACTIVATION

Tactics that drive immediate, measurable action.

#17

ALWAYS LEAD WITH A STRONG OFFER



Clarity and value drive action, which is why the offer is what it's all about. Even if your product may be excellent, people need a compelling reason to act now. Limited time offers, exclusive bonuses, risk reversals and genuine value additions are the elements that get people to respond.

#18

USE MULTICHANNEL ACTIVATION



The customer journey spans multiple channels, and your marketing must too. Direct mail, email, SMS, digital ads and in-person experiences work better together when they reinforce consistent messaging. To integrate channels effectively, use QR codes on direct mail to drive digital engagement and retarget website visitors with physical mail.

#19

TRIGGER MESSAGES BASED ON BEHAVIOR



Send communications when they are contextually relevant: Abandoned cart emails, birthday offers and re-engagement campaigns for dormant customers are key examples. Behavioral triggers convert at 3–5x the rate of batch-and-blast campaigns.

#20

MAKE EVERY CTA OBVIOUS AND EASY



People act when the next step is unmistakable. Test button colors, placement, wording (“Get Started” vs “Sign Up” vs “Learn More”), size and urgency. The smallest changes can yield significant results.

#21

DESIGN LANDING PAGES FOR CONVERSION



Every campaign needs a dedicated landing page optimized for a single conversion goal, emphasizing a focused message, featuring friction-free forms and fast load times. To ensure optimization, remove navigation distractions, match ad messaging to landing page copy and use clear, compelling calls-to-action.

#22

APPLY DATA TO PRIORITIZE HIGH-VALUE AUDIENCES



Not all customers are equal, so match investment to outcomes. Calculate customer lifetime value (CLV) by segment and invest accordingly. Be willing to spend more to acquire customers who will be worth more over time.

#23

FOCUS ON LIFETIME VALUE, NOT ONE-TIME WINS



Retention compounds results, making the pursuit of a lifetime of sales far more profitable than one-time business. The businesses that win are those that maximize customer lifetime value through excellent service, smart cross-selling, and thoughtful re-engagement.

#24

TRACK, ATTRIBUTE, IMPROVE



Testing creative, channels, audiences and offers is essential for keeping learning loops alive. To get smarter with every campaign, use proper attribution modeling to pinpoint what works, challenge your assumptions rigorously and document both successes and failures.

PROMPT

Which tactics could drive measurable action for you today?

DIGITAL, DATA & AI

Leveraging technology without losing humanity.

#25

ADAPT CONSTANTLY



Marketing and markets are changing faster than ever. Agility wins. To achieve this review performance regularly, optimize based on what you learn and iterate quickly. Be willing to kill underperforming campaigns and double down on winners.

#26

BUILD AND PROTECT YOUR FIRST-PARTY DATA



With third-party cookies disappearing across browsers and privacy regulations tightening globally, first-party data gives you a sustainable competitive advantage.

First-party data is your most valuable long-term asset so collect it ethically, store it securely, use it wisely and be transparent about what you're doing with it.



#27

BUILD WITH DATA QUALITY FIRST



Bad data leads to poor targeting, wasted budget and damaged relationships. Data hygiene is essential. Regularly clean your databases, remove unengaged contacts, update information and maintain compliance with privacy regulations.

#28

USE AI TO ACCELERATE (NOT REPLACE) STRATEGY



AI enhances creativity, insights and efficiency by assisting with content ideation, first drafts, data analysis, personalization at scale and repetitive tasks. However, human strategy, creativity, judgment and oversight remain essential. AI is a co-pilot, not a replacement.

#29

CREATE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ACROSS FORMATS



Thought leadership builds trust and authority, so be generous with your expertise. You can achieve this by creating varied content, such as short-form video, long-form articles, podcasts and social posts, to meet audiences where they learn.

#30

USE MARKETING AUTOMATION FOR LIFECYCLE JOURNEYS



Modern marketing automation is the key to intelligent lifecycle management, enabling you to nurture, convert, retain, and re-engage.

Sophisticated campaigns, such as welcome series for new subscribers, onboarding sequences for new customers, re-engagement for dormant users and win-back campaigns for churned customers, can all be mapped out and automated.

#31

PRIORITIZE SPEED—LOAD TIME IS REVENUE



Slow pages lose attention and money, so aim for load times under 3 seconds. Since over 60% of web traffic is mobile, every second of delay costs you conversions. To achieve optimal page speed, you must optimize images, minimize code, ensure efficient hosting and test on real devices.

#32

MASTER SOCIAL ALGORITHMS



Understand platform behaviors and tailor content accordingly, because each platform has its own culture and algorithm. For instance, LinkedIn rewards thoughtful commentary, TikTok values entertainment and authenticity, Instagram prioritizes visual storytelling, and X (Twitter) favors timely commentary. Don't post the same content everywhere.

#33

MEASURE INCREMENTALITY, NOT JUST IMPRESSIONS



Know what actually drives growth. Did your campaign cause the sale, or would it have happened anyway? Use holdout groups, geo-testing and incrementality studies to understand true lift. This is how you avoid wasting budget on ineffective channels.

#34

USE ETHICAL, EXPLAINABLE AI



As AI becomes more prevalent in marketing, transparency builds long-term trust. To maintain this trust, ethical AI practices are essential: never use AI to manipulate, train models without permission or make decisions you can't explain. Ethical AI isn't just right—it's smart business.



SEARCH, CONTENT & SEO

Building discoverability in an evolving search landscape.

#35

WRITE FOR HUMANS FIRST, SEARCH ENGINES SECOND



Google's systems prioritize helpful, people-first information created to benefit users, not content designed to manipulate rankings. Therefore, make clarity, usefulness and genuine expertise your core SEO strategy, not keyword manipulation.

#36

DEMONSTRATE AUTHENTIC E-E-A-T



Showcase real experience, expertise, authoritativeness and trustworthiness (E-E-A-T). Your lived work, case studies, technical knowledge and unique point-of-view are competitive advantages in an era of AI-generated content. Make your experience and expertise prominent throughout your content.

#37

FOCUS ON SEARCH INTENT, NOT WORD COUNT



Effective content aligns with what the user is trying to accomplish: learn, compare, evaluate, or decide. Whether your content is 800 or 2,500 words matters far less than whether you comprehensively answer the user's question and meet their needs at each stage of their journey.

#38

MAINTAIN TECHNICAL FUNDAMENTALS



SEO still relies on essential technical elements: clear title tags, compelling meta descriptions, logical header hierarchy, readable URLs and strong internal linking. Technical clarity creates discoverability. These basics provide the foundation that allows great content to perform.

#39

UPDATE CONTENT REGULARLY



Plan for ongoing content maintenance from the start. Most pages should be reviewed and refreshed every 6–12 months. Fast-changing topics demand even more frequent updates to stay relevant. Stale content loses rankings and trust.

#40

CITE SOURCES AND LINK STRATEGICALLY



Use reputable, authoritative external sources when presenting data or claims. Linking to high-quality sources builds credibility, strengthens trust with readers and signals reliability to search engines.

#41

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS



Track rankings, organic traffic, engagement quality and conversions—not vanity metrics. Use performance data to refine your strategy and identify meaningful optimization opportunities. Let the data tell you what's working and where to invest.

#42

BUILD FOR THE LONG TERM



Consistent execution of SEO best practices over months and years builds domain authority and topical expertise that become increasingly difficult for competitors to match. Think marathon, not sprint.

PROMPT

Where can you strengthen your content strategy and search visibility?

TRUST, REPUTATION & COMMUNITY

Earning credibility in a skeptical world.

#43

TELL STORIES WITH DATA



To make insights memorable, your presentation should be visual, emotional and simple. Data tells you what happened, but stories help people understand why it matters. Use case studies, customer success stories and compelling visualizations to make your point.

#44

MONITOR YOUR REPUTATION IN REAL TIME



Social listening and risk detection are key to preventing crises when issues can explode in hours, not days. Use monitoring tools to track brand mentions, sentiment and emerging issues. It's crucial to have a crisis communication plan ready and respond quickly and transparently.

#45

OFFER VALUE, NOT JUST PROMOTION



Tips, tools, insights build credibility. Good content offers something to the audience, so share insights, report on trends, offer expert advice on topics they care about. The 80/20 rule still works: 80% value, 20% promotion.

#46

USE SOCIAL PROOF EVERYWHERE



People trust other people more than they trust brands, which is why testimonials, case studies, ratings and reviews convert. User-generated content is often worth more than paid advertising. Display customer reviews prominently, share detailed case studies and show real results.



#47

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES WITH RESPECT



When participating in online communities (Reddit, LinkedIn Groups, Slack channels, forums), lead with helpfulness, not promotion. Focus on answering questions, sharing insights and building genuine relationships. Contribute; don't hijack spaces.

#48

MAKE TRANSPARENCY A HABIT



In an era of misinformation and privacy concerns, transparency about clear terms, pricing, data use and expectations is a competitive advantage. Be upfront about what things cost, explain how you use customer data, and make terms and conditions readable. Hidden fees and unclear practices destroy trust.

PROMPT

Where should you invest to build deeper credibility or loyalty?

YOU AS A LEADER

Personal principles for professional success.

#49

CULTIVATE CONTINUOUS LEARNING



Stay curious and adaptive, because the landscape changes rapidly. Dedicate time and budget to continuous learning through resources like courses, conferences, podcasts, books, webinars and experiments. The more you know, the more successful your marketing will be.

#50

LEAD WITH HUMANITY



Empathy, clarity, and integrity drive exceptional results, both internally and externally. Focus on taking good care of yourself, your family, your customers and your team. When you prioritize people, the bottom line follows naturally.



PLUS ONE MORE!

#51

THE PRINCIPLE THAT DRIVES THEM ALL



Act with intention. Every message, touchpoint and decision must serve the customer, protect trust and create measurable value. Marketing now holds immense power to build businesses and shape culture. Use that power wisely.



BIG RESULTS START HERE

You've got 50 (+1) principles to spark your next breakthrough. Now let's put them in motion—together.



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