

Book Review

Book Title: Permission Marketing
Author: Seth Godin

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Summary

This book by Seth Godin offers an exciting introduction to "permission marketing". Drawing on his own experiences as founder and president of Yoyodyne, he demonstrates that permission marketing can build brand awareness, create trust and hence lead to high opportunities of sales.

Seth Godin was the Vice President of Direct Marketing at Yahoo. He also founded Yoyodyne, the company who invented Permission Marketing via email. So why has his work in those companies led him to coin the term "Permission Marketing"?

In Godin's words, Permission Marketing is an approach where marketers obtain permission from consumers before progressing to the step of buying. If you have checked boxes in email replies to receive information on special offers, you have definitely come across Permission Marketing.

Readers are first introduced to the concept of Interruption Marketing, the traditional way of getting consumer attention. This commonly practised marketing approach is based on huge advertising budgets, and is all about capturing consumers' attention. All these generate what we see and hear today on the television, radio and newspapers. Guess what? They are termed as "clutter".

Although such techniques to gain "brand trust" are expensive, they have been executed vigorously and results have indeed been delivered.

As technology changes the world's approach to advertising, Godin feels that marketers are starting to discover that the old ways are not working. His book presents Permission Marketing, the alternative cost effective approach, and how it will help marketers, and more importantly how it works through the email engine.

Permission Marketing offers consumers the opportunity to volunteer to be marketed to. Godin guarantees that consumers will pay more attention to the marketing messages. The author relates Permission Marketing to the social dating process. And just like dating, it turns strangers into friends, and friends into lifetime customers. Moreover, it is more personal, relevant and specific.

I think this book does offer good advice for marketers who would like to try Permission Marketing, especially for those who have always been executing Interruption Marketing. In fact, according to Godin, Interruption Marketing is a necessary step in the development of a permission-based marketing

system, as there is always the foundational need to create the initial interest.

However, subsequent steps in Permission Marketing differ from traditional ways. The customer is asked for permission to receive continued messages from the marketer, usually with an incentive offered. The marketer continuously offers ongoing incentives for the customer's permission. In exchange, the marketer is permitted to tell the story of the product or service, without the fear of being interrupted by competitors, or other traditional interruption-based marketers.

I believe when marketers read this book, especially those who are used to traditional marketing methods, they will be able to compare the differences and understand that such campaigns are more interactive, and even lead to less wastage!

The following "five steps to dating your customer" were introduced in the book, to allow readers to draw relevance of converting trust to profits:

1. Offer the prospect an incentive, such as a prize, to volunteer (or to "raise his hand.")
2. Using the attention offered by the prospect, offer a curriculum over time, teaching the consumer about your product or service.
3. Reinforce the incentive to guarantee that the prospect maintains the permission.
4. Offer additional incentives to get even more permission from the consumer.
5. Over time, leverage the permission to change consumer behaviour toward profits.

I do think that the book is a good read. It teaches that gaining permission is a necessary investment, and also that frequency builds trust. Permission facilitates that desired frequency. Hence, permission that is used correctly will equate to trust and therefore profitability. This book will broaden the minds of marketers, and offer them a different perspective to opt-in marketing.

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