PART ONE

CHAPTER

1

Marketing, Sweet Marketing

> *Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen.*
>
> —Michael Jordan, basketball legend[1]

I'm a marketer at heart and by career. I have always worked hard to become a leader in the marketing of consumer and high-technology products in both the business-to-consumer and business-to-business areas. I love marketing for what it is and what it could be, and I've been blessed to work with high-talent teams to successfully launch 20 new brands in a mix of companies and industries. Some have mushroomed into $1 billion-plus brands. Along the way, I have contributed to growing the brand equity of many world-renowned brands at Philip Morris, Colgate Palmolive, and the Ford Motor Company—as well as Pitney Bowes, where I serve as the chief marketing officer (CMO).

I speak as a marketer who has transformed the Pitney Bowes brand of this $5.5 billion company, garnering top industry honors along the way. I have played a small part orchestrating the huge efforts of many other talented people. Yet, for all the achievements of all of those I've worked with, I look at the marketing world at large and lament at much of what I see and hear.

I am on the road for much of the year talking to our customers, our employees, our competitors, and marketers from an array of other businesses. Their views are as arresting as they are worrying. For far too many companies, marketing is managed the way it traditionally has been. It's as if the marketing function (and the universities that teach marketing fundamentals) somehow missed the millennium and just kept plugging along without recognizing that the world—most certainly the business world—has moved into a new century.

Most importantly, too many in the marketing field today think that their work should be isolated, kept apart from the rest of the company. They believe that marketing *should be* an arcane practice—that marketers are somehow above the rest of the company, ready to save engineering, production, shipping, the rest of the C-suite officers—even the salesforce—when the business horizon is most bleak. Sales collapsing? No winning products in the pipeline? Customers whining on the Internet? Let it all simmer for a few months; then, with trumpets blaring . . . *Never fear! Marketing is here!*

One CMO of a large Fortune 500 company confided to me that he only spoke to his CEO when there was a problem. The rest of the time they co-existed in glorious silence. The CMO couldn't see what the CEO could offer when it came to marketing; the CEO was above such things. It's a mind-set right out of old Saturday-morning cartoon shows, and just as unrealistic. But this attitude is only the first mistake of the traditional marketing minds. Never fear: They're making many others.

It doesn't have to be this way. In essence, that's what this entire book is about: Marketing as we want it, starting with marketing as I now believe it should be defined and practiced.

The Work of Marketing

Let me capture some of my thoughts so you're not left hanging in suspense. Perhaps the most important thing for me to say is that marketing, to my mind, is not static. I meet too many people who think that marketing has become so refined in its tools and techniques that it is the only department in the modern corporation that is supposed to run on automatic pilot. The view of too many is that marketing merely does a few surveys or focus groups and, voila, the next mega product or super brand is born. In truth, marketing is much more work than that. It is the energy center for any company; and, as such, it has to be ferociously engaged with people outside the company (namely: customers) as well as people inside the company.

You heard me right. I did say *inside* the company. Now, most people would agree that marketing needs to be in contact with customers. But I will show you, as we proceed, that being engaged with customers is not simply about demographic polls, surveys, and focus groups. It's about a constant dialogue with the customer to such an extent that the people inside marketing are also inside the heads of those who buy from the business. Yet, though that suggestion will startle many people, I find people are more startled when I propose that marketing needs to be equally in touch with as many employees, as many managers, and as many departments as it can. Your *to connect* list should be as long as your *to do* list.

The most important thing I have learned in my global journey is that marketing must elevate itself to the level of a truly free marketplace. We often use that term, "free marketplace," as a toss-off, something that sounds good in almost any context. But in an age in which customers can buy just about anything they want from vendors large and small located down the street or in another country, the demand on marketing to align the company with the marketplace isn't some nice thing to do. It is a core requirement for doing business in the twenty-first century. I've learned that you can't demote, disregard, or demean the central importance of marketing. It has become the heart of business and, as a result, has to take its deserved seat at the boardroom table. That's why I want to share all that I've learned since I left India. I not only left my homeland, I also left the assumptions that too many still hold about what marketing can do for the success of any enterprise. I've learned what marketing *must* do if any company is to be successful today.

Sweet Sweat

For me, the past five years, in particular, have been fascinating, exhilarating, and at times downright exhausting. Having observed and sometimes worked with some of the great brands, I tried to first identify and then codify what their companies do. But simply trying to figure it out was not enough. For a practitioner, it never can be—not if you want to try to write a book like this. I've always loved that Nike slogan: "Just do it." On the wall of every office I have ever had, I have tacked up a now slightly tired-looking Nike poster with those three inspiring words.

That is what my career and thinking has been driven by: making marketing happen. At Pitney Bowes, I got the chance to take my ideas and put them to the test (more about that later). I am particularly grateful to Mike Critelli, my CEO, for that opportunity. And, did I learn some things. The devil, they say is in the details—and how. My neat theories have been revised along the way. But I am pleased to say the big idea has come through relatively unscathed. It is what I have learned at all the companies I have been lucky enough to work with that really allows me to say for sure that I have discovered a new way of looking at business—one that works. It is a new (and improved) approach to marketing that drives growth. I call it the *sweet spot*, and, in my experience, it boosts revenue and profits. I have seen the results myself.

My notion of the sweet spot isn't a mathematical formula. Success in business cannot be reduced to a neat formula—no matter what a business school professor might tell you. In business, a sweet spot is *a place, time, or experience in which a company's brands, products and services, finances, leaders, and marketers are in tune and in time with consumer needs, aspirations, and budgets.* Everything and everyone is aligned; the company's differentiator from all other companies and competitors is cogent, persuasive, and alluring. Repeatedly finding these sweet spots is the key to growth in increasingly competitive times.

The Sweet Touch

So what is this new approach to business all about? It is based on simple observation. Once you start thinking about sweet spots, you begin to see them all around. But though businesses in a sweet spot may be easy to see, the sweet spot is *not* easy to achieve. Indeed, it doesn't happen often. Sweet spots don't just materialize. Some companies seem to encounter sweet spots and are able to commercially maximize them over and over. Others do not. Though it doesn't happen overnight, some business leaders seem to know exactly what their managers and employees need to focus on *today* so that things happen by a near-term tomorrow. Sweet spots don't happen by accident or good luck. And those who confuse it as such are doomed to fall fast and far behind the competitor possessing its awesome power. Like the tennis player (or any athlete, really) whose prowess is enhanced by a sweet spot—a competitive edge that's an almost mystical mixture of muscle, turf domination, timing, experience, flexibility, resilience, know-how, attitude, and high-performing equipment—companies that achieve a business sweet spot seem to know their game and play it better than anyone else.

Look around. There are many companies tied to computers. There's only one Apple Computer. Others deliver packages overnight; there's absolutely, positively only one FedEx. Coffee shops go back thousands of years. Then there's the aroma, taste, and smiles you derive every time you walk into the door of a Starbucks, *any* Starbucks. Until mid-2004, anyone searching for news and information online had his or her own favorite search engine. That was before "Googled" hit the Internet world unlike any other word, before or since. Lumber and nails are two of the most basic commodities, but Home Depot has transformed the lumberyard of old into a business that has awakened the dream-it-and-do-it-yourself spirit of more people than anyone could have imagined.

Each of these companies has found "it." They're all businesses enjoying a sweet spot. They have created a business opportunity that was untapped before them. Then they leveraged their marketing so it became the main propellant for their ongoing success. And what they achieved was not points on a score sheet, but maximal business success and as close to a warranty on sustained growth as any company can enjoy in today's marketplace. While some executives of powerful companies might allege that their business was as simple as being in the right place at the right time, sweet spot companies know that it's always been about setting goals higher than anyone else—then developing one's abilities to be able to achieve those goals. So how do they do that? That's the question that I couldn't get out of my head. Indeed, it is the question that should always be in every marketer's head. *How do they do it?*

Others in my field have sensed what I sense about the need to permanently shelve old-way marketing. For example, in 2000, Sergio Zyman wrote *The End of Marketing as We Know It.*[2] Now, Sergio is no wallflower; and when he was chief marketing officer for Coca-Cola, he helped to boost annual sales from 9 to 15 million cases—he knows his stuff. (Sergio even offered me a job with Coca-Cola but that would have meant going back to India and sorting out its business there. Coca-Cola had paid some $65 million for an Indian business, but it hadn't secured the distribution channel. Sergio asked me to sort it out; I chose not to. In the end, because they didn't understand Indian business culture or the marketplace, the company spent the same amount again to buy the distribution channel. And for the record, I still think I made the right decision, but that's another story.) Sergio has been most vocal on how traditional marketing today too often misses the mark and leads companies toward a cliff, if not off of it. Even the best companies (like Coca-Cola) can find itself on the wrong path as a business because its interface with the market hasn't been clearly and convincingly thought through. Christian Sarkar interviewed Sergio on this point, leading to this humorous, if sad, example:

> *There's nothing wrong with innovation . . . [but you'd] be amazed at how many companies confuse what they know how to do, their core competence, with what consumers will buy from them, what I call their core essence. For example, Coke once got into the shrimp farming business—we had core competencies covering purchasing, distribution, sales, logistics, and global operational capabilities. Where it all fell apart was that we never thought about why customers would buy shrimp from us in the first place. Shrimp farming was not a core essence. Consumers simply couldn't make a connection between shrimp and Coke.*[3]

Coke, selling shrimp—like Forrest Gump? Don't laugh at Coca-Cola until you look at your own business history. It's easy in the corporate world (especially using old thinking) to become convinced that if you can do something, all you have to do after that is market it successfully. The takeoffs on two old sayings—*if you build it, marketing will get them to come*, or *success is 1 percent inspiration, the rest is marketing*—were never true. These tired sayings are beyond false; they're vapid. Anymore, such viewpoints will be especially delusional.

Who Needs Marketing?

So, is marketing important? Yes, now more than ever. Most consumer-facing companies know that (although I am staggered by how few business-to-business companies really—and I mean *really*—understand and practice marketing). So what is marketing today all about? "The goal is for companies to better understand customers' buying preferences and link that knowledge to the delivery of products and services that are more relevant to customer needs and to develop closer channel relationships. But the demands on marketing don't stop there," observe Gail McGovern and John Quelch of Harvard Business School. "Companies are looking to chief marketing officers to contain costs in media expenditures, marketing services procurement, and market research. Now that firms have reengineered manufacturing and supply chain processes to cut costs, there is a natural desire to make marketing more effective, too."[4] That's quite a roster of things on the CMO's to-do list.

As I see it, marketing is the essential link between the seller and the buyer. Of course, it's infinitely more complicated than that. And the "new marketing" advocated by Sergio Zyman and many others has not taken hold across any industry I can think of. Those relatively few enterprises that have caught the essence of marketing the way we all would like it to be have indeed enjoyed sweet success. But before we focus on the sweet spots in the business world, let's just review what it is we're trying to get away from and make some quick notes on marketing as we would want it to be.

At a Chief Marketing Organization Roundtable, I gave some thought to the ebb of old marketing and the much-needed flow of new marketing done right. This is by no means a complete list, but it will give you a strong flavor of how marketing was—and is—changing:

Marketing, Old Style	**Modern Marketing, New and Definitely Improved**
Flock appeal: Consumers are like sheep. They just need to be herded. Presented with the right message, they will automatically buy and keep on buying. Marketing creates and transmits that message.	*Power to the consumer:* Consumers are now empowered. They are able to do things they could not do just a decade ago (e.g., research product choices online). Marketing needs to encourage this trend and make such consumer communication a two-way (and easier) process.
Gullibility rules: Consumers are naïve; if they can be led to believe that they are being told "the truth," they will suck it up. In short, they will believe the message more than they will believe their own senses.	*Smart rules:* Hype and spin may be okay for the political world, but the commercial world has evolved. Consumers are demanding that they be treated as educated buyers, perhaps (probably?) as savvy as the seller.
The salivation solution: Marketing is all about emotion. If you can get the customer to salivate, he will (somehow, some way) find the resources to buy.	*The balance's the thing:* Marketing is an increasingly rational process, one in which the customer's needs (hard realities) must be balanced against his emotions (aspirations).
Wizardry: You can say anything, anytime, to trigger sales. The best way to boost sagging quarterly sales is to turn the problem over to the wizards in marketing.	*Strategy:* Short-term sales goals have to work hand-in-hand with long-term marketing objectives. No one can afford to burn a long-term relationship for a quick sales spike.

(continued)

Marketing, Old Style	Modern Marketing, New and Definitely Improved
Loud hailers: Marketing is a multichannel, multimedia job. Once the message has been tooled, the only other thing for marketing to do is to yell it out from valley floor to mountaintop by employing every available medium.	*Only connect:* Go where your customers are going. Marketing's job is to cut through all the communications clutter and muddy multichannel messaging. Meet your customer halfway; to do that, you have to know (not guess) where she is.
Find them and shake them: Marketing must grab customers by the lapels and shake them awake. All customers are trying to hide.	*Meet and greet:* Marketing has to find out where the customers are and then meet them. The job of marketing is to invite interest from customers who are hoping to be engaged.

You can't help but look at the split between old and new marketing to realize that the gaps are no longer subtle. I like the way Mark Miller, president of Rapp Collins Worldwide, described what he was seeing: "[Old marketing] is based on the simple premise that through mass media I can reach a whole lot of people very, very cheaply." Some prospects will fall off in the initial consideration of the product or service because it doesn't fit into the parameters of their "desired experience." Others, who get past that point, will discover that the commodity is lacking key elements that they consider essential and will turn elsewhere. Still others will be lost when the decision-making process gets down to things like price and color. "The model says if I keep shoveling whole buckets of people into the top part of the funnel, I'll get enough down into my business so that it will be profitable."[5]

How right on is that? The idea of shoveling "whole buckets of people" into the buying pipeline is precisely the single aim and goal of the traditional marketing mind. No wonder the article was headlined *100-Year-Old Marketing Model Is "Cracked."* I would add that it's not only cracked, it's smashed, crumbling, disintegrating, and irretrievably broken.

But you don't have to go back 100 years to see the shifts that are happening in business as registered in the marketing function. Just think about the changes we've seen over the past three decades in marketing and branding strategies. In the 1970s and 1980s, the emphasis was on "whole buckets of people" mass marketing. Pepsi and Nike are two examples of this. Both companies aimed their messages across demographic groups so broadly that it seemed that the challenge was nothing more than "How do we translate the message for *this* nationality?" It was a one-size-fits-all era; the aim being to ship the same products to customers across the globe. Just translate the label. In fact, at the time, it was "cool" to be seen as pushing the same products, the same styles, to an ever-wider phalanx of buyers. Differentiation on the basis of customer segments wasn't that important in the 1980s (although differentiation between brands was). Mass marketing was king. All the marketer had to do was pump out the same message to everyone. And if sales stalled? Simple, turn up the volume!

Then came the 1990s when the emphasis turned to customers rather than masses. In the 1990s, marketing was focused on acquiring new customers and retaining old ones. It was a period of tremendous success for companies like Wal-Mart, the giant superstore chain. Wal-Mart based its proposition on great customer value; and, with stores opening at an ever-faster clip, the chain attracted people from a wide geographic area to their stores. Wal-Mart is now operating in 15 countries with 3,700 U.S. stores and 1,500 elsewhere.[6] But you don't have to patronize an actual Wal-Mart store to know the marketing model it uses.

In our new century, the need to find sweet spots is there and it is growing. A number of trends are converging that make finding sweet spots both more difficult and more essential to business survival. This is an important point—a pivotal point, if you will, so let's just restate that: Sweet spot thinking is about a new way of thinking that meets the challenges of the twenty-first century. In his brilliant book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins (one of my heroes) describes a group of companies that have made the step from good to excellent. I'd like to think that *Sweet Spot* picks up where Collins left off: It offers the modus operandi to become a great company in the context of the new century. So what are these trends that demand a new response?

Jewels in the Crown

The first trend is increasing competition. It doesn't matter which business you are in, competition is increasing and increasingly global. New competitive frontiers are opening up. Look at India and China. A widget maker in Wisconsin now needs to look to Wuhan, China, and Mumbai, India, for the new competition. If you're Dell (market share 18 percent), the company coming up on your outside is the Chinese company Lenovo (market share 8 percent), which is now the world's third-largest personal computing company. More worryingly for Dell, Lenovo has the largest market share in China of any computer company.

As Tom Friedman has said, "The world is flat."[7] It really is. We are all members of the Flat Earth Society now. The advent of digital communication has made it increasingly easy for companies to compete in the world economy. *Chindia*, the vital new combined economic force of China and India, is setting the new agenda. Both China and India are racing to build businesses that can compete directly with Western companies and take business away from them. Their value proposition is very simple: Quality with substantially lower prices. Can you compete?

To give you an idea of what you're up against, through the wonders of web conferencing I attended a board meeting of an Indian company for which I am a director. The previous year's revenues were up 60 percent and a discussion of the year's performance was top of the agenda. I anticipated mutual backslapping. Imagine if your company upped revenues by 60 percent in a year. I was startled when the meeting began. There were recriminations rather than celebrations. The Indian executives were disappointed with 60 percent growth. They wanted to know what had gone wrong. The outcome was that the next year's target was set at more than 100 percent. This isn't wishful thinking. The management team is young and ambitious, they have the strategy figured out, the execution plan is ready, and they are working on building a technology platform superior to any company in the world. They have easy access to capital and are hiring rapidly to grow. The average age of all the employees in the company is less than 30. Their ambition, drive, and optimism are infectious. The meeting ended late, it was 2.00 A.M. where I was in Connecticut; but I felt reinvigorated, as if I was involved with something important. Remember: This is Bangalore, not Silicon Valley.

The company I am involved with is 24x7 Learning, which provides web-based training for thousands of information technology workers in India. The company has the largest market share in the category. The management team is infectiously optimistic and believes that the company can grow by more than 100 percent—perhaps closer to 200 percent—in one year. Yes, I said one year.

As you know, India is now the outsourcing capital of the world. In the past 10 years, the IT services industry has achieved average annual growth of 40 percent. The larger Indian technology companies are growing even more rapidly by providing technology labor to the rest of the world. Tata Consultancy Services is expected to grow to a $10 billion company by 2010; Wipro is anticipating growing to $7 billion by 2009; Infosys Technologies and HCL Technologies are similarly expanding at a rapid pace. To these names can be added Mphasis (as I write this book, a portion of this company has been sold to EDS for $400 million) and Iflex (partly owned by Oracle—thanks to a $900 million investment). There are—and will be—many more.

And it is not just technology. Indian pharmaceutical companies, like Ranbaxy and Dr. Reddy, are competing head-on with global pharma giants and making them rethink their strategies. The Indian auto component and specialty chemical industries are also gaining ground—helped by the staggering fact that more than 400,000 engineers graduate every year from Indian universities.

Speaking with Nandan Nilekani, CEO of Infosys, it becomes very clear that there is no stopping; growth is for good. Nilekani understands the competitive landscape inside out. His goal is to penetrate Fortune 1000 companies and become their partner in every aspect of their business. In some cases, he wants to provide global development centers based in India; in other cases, he wants to provide the engine for growth through product development. Nilekani and Infosys are dedicated to leading technological change.

More is to come. Wipro CEO, Azim Premji, one of the richest men in the world, brims with enthusiasm when you talk to him about the possibilities for Western companies in India. Indeed, companies are now spending heavily in India for the next wave of innovation. They want to be where the action and the innovation is. Vodafone, the British telecom company, paid $1.5 billion for a 10 percent stake in Indian mobile operator Bharti Tele-Ventures, which went public in 2002 on the Bombay Stock Exchange and has seen its market cap jump to $10.5 billion. Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, a private equity firm, paid $900 million to buy 85 percent of software maker Flextronics Software Systems; IBM paid handsomely for acquiring Daksh, a business-process outsourcing firm. Microsoft, Intel, Citigroup, HSBC, and Cisco Systems have all pledged more than $1 billion worth of investment in their Indian subsidiaries to propel innovation for the parent companies. IBM recently held a worldwide investor conference in India and pledged $6 billion of investment to its Indian subsidiary. That's a measure of how seriously Big Blue regards the market; and with good reason.

During the past few years, the Indian economy has grown at more than eight percent per year. Now, it is at an inflection point. Consumer demand is growing three to five times faster than the overall economy. For example, the mobile-phone subscriber base is growing faster than anywhere else in the world and is projected to reach 250 million within five years. Airline traffic has grown from 12 million to 47 million and is projected to grow 20 percent annually over the next five years. With the rise of a middle class in the country, demand for consumer products has grown tremendously.

Indian Starters

The attractions of developing businesses in India are increasingly obvious. Hutchinson Whampoa, LG Electronics, and Samsung have all built more than $1 billion in annual revenue in India. Other companies, such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Citibank, Coca-Cola, and Pepsi, are now household names in India.

The successful global companies in India need to have the following characteristics. First, they need to adapt their businesses to local conditions. What works in New York may not work exactly the same in New Delhi. The McAloo Tikki burger, made of potatoes, has the highest sales in McDonald's restaurants in India. Most Indians don't eat beef, so McDonald's decided to respect the sensitivities of the customers and not serve their most popular ingredient in India. Similarly, Pizza Hut's Tandoori Pizza has helped store traffic grow fourfold. Pizza Hut now has more than 150 restaurants in India, and the cash registers are ringing overtime.

The second requirement is to shape the market by introducing approaches that are indigenous to India—but which can then be leveraged in other countries. Colgate Palmolive, Hindustan Lever, and ITC understand this. For example, Hindustan Lever introduced single-use sachets of shampoos and soap products so that lower-income customers have access to premium brands. Sales have been phenomenal. And finally, companies need to have a long-term commitment. One of the biggest mistakes they can make is for the senior executives to make an investment commitment without thinking through the horizon for return on investment.

Choice Rules

Look elsewhere and you will see similarly daunting changes. The rise of India and China is crucial, but there are other issues that their rise highlights:

- *Proliferation of brands:* Think how customer choice rules the marketplace. Today's economy is nothing but choices—1,500 advertising messages bombard consumers daily.
- *Increasing regulatory change:* The telecommunications, power, and even financial industries have all recently witnessed regulatory change. The rules of the game are constantly being changed and, yet again, competition will increase.
- *No escaping short-term pressures:* At the same time, the pressure is on from Wall Street for results. Senior executives must deliver. If they fail to, they will lose their jobs. CEO turnover is rapidly increasing—research suggests that half of all CEOs are dismissed from office rather than choosing their time to close the office door for the final time.[8] (And CMO turnover is similarly on the rise.) With pressure on companies to deliver improved results every quarter, there is internal pressure. Individual departments must deliver measurable results. They must prove their worth every day of their corporate lives.
- *Mortality:* Given all this, it is little wonder that companies and their brands struggle to stand the test of time. Walk down Main Street in your town and you will see what I mean. Take a look at the store names. Now think back 10 years, 20 years, perhaps even 30 years: How many of the store names were the same? According to the experts, half of all S&P 500 will not be around by the year 2020. The consulting firm McKinsey & Company went back to 1935 and tracked all the Standard & Poor (S&P) 500 companies since then and found out that half of them disappear every 20 years.

And the pace of change is accelerating. It is a sobering thought, but this is the reality of the corporate world in the first decade of the new millennium.

Everything from the emerging threat from Asian companies to over-supply and brand proliferation is putting pressure on corporations and executives. The days when a company could afford to simply make contact with the market—to hit the ball any way that it could—are largely over. Success requires doing it *just right*—hitting home runs (and stealing the bases whenever the opportunity presents itself).

And you know what? If you are a customer, you will be the first to know that you have experienced a sweet spot. And guess what? Once you've had that experience, nothing else will ever live up to it. The reality is that sweet spot companies generate their own loyal customer base—which is one helluva platform for growth. But this warranty for success applies only if you can consistently repeat the experience. You have to hit the sweet spot again and again.

The Meaning of Intimacy

These new realities are already having an impact. For some companies, marketing means more than it did in the past. For them, marketing is neither about mass, nor about customers in bulk: The most successful companies today develop intimate relationships with their customers; today, the *customer relationship* is king. What does this mean? In practice, it means that companies must deliver intimate and powerful customer experiences that build great and profitable relationships. "The most important thing is the customer experience, and how we improve it without commoditizing it," said John Fleming, CMO of Wal-Mart, when I asked him about his priorities.

Businesses must continue to make the customers first in everything they do, from providing them with the best products to offering the most innovative services. Only now, you must go much, much further to reach the sweet spot of sustained success. If I could tag just two signal changes that can help a company move from old-think to new marketing and new management, it would be to:

1. *Initiate meaningful dialogue between your company and the customer.* Ideally, you must invest in developing one-to-one relationships, which can be accomplished through a variety of techniques, including database management, personalized services, and intelligent communications. This also means segmenting your customer base. The rule of 80/20 applies more than ever, that is, 20 percent of your customers provide 80 percent of your profit. Also, you need to communicate with people only in ways that are appropriate to them and only about products and services they are interested in.
2. *You must rethink your operations in terms of your brand.* Everything you do must have a clear brand proposition, something that expresses benefits that are of direct relevance to your customers. You express your brand position through all the marketing mix: be it advertising, direct marketing, Internet presence, public relations, internal marketing, and all other media. (For this concept, I love the term "full-circle marketing." More on that later.) Most importantly, your brand proposition must be understood throughout your organization, from marketing, to sales, to shipping, to service, to finance, to engineering, to after-sales customer service.

So, if you want to find your own sweet spot, then read on. There's no business like a sweet spot business.