

Billion-Dollar Brand Playbook



Grow Your Revenue with the
7 Principles of Effective Marketing

ONE
BILLION
!AGENCY



OneBillion! Agency was founded in 2023 by three marketing & advertising veterans who spent decades growing billion-dollar brands. We realized that growing a billion-dollar brand isn't complicated, but it can get complex. Billion-dollar brands follow a similar playbook, and while every brand is different, we help fast-growth brands quickly gain new customers and market share.

Over the decades, we've tackled the toughest B2B, B2C, and DTC challenges helping our organizations and clients with Brand Planning, Creative Development, Digital Strategies, Media Measurements Solutions. We've led organizational transformations, technology evaluations, agency searches, and more.

And now we're on a mission to leverage our 50 years of combined experience to elevate and grow your business.



We've used the following principles on brands of every size and in every category, and the effect is always the same. If you follow these principles in a way that is authentic to your brand, **your brand will gain new customers and increase market share.**



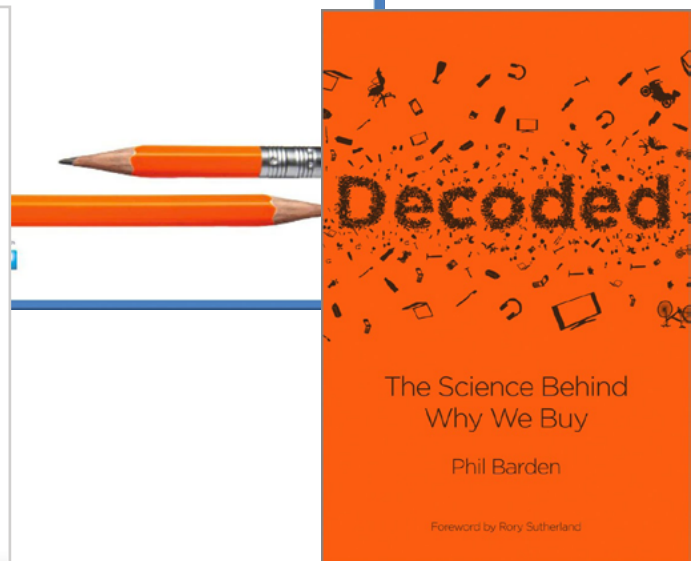
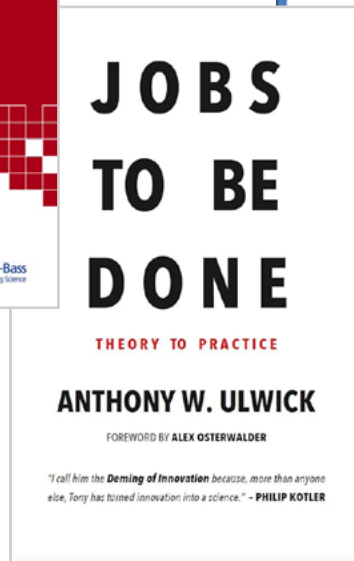
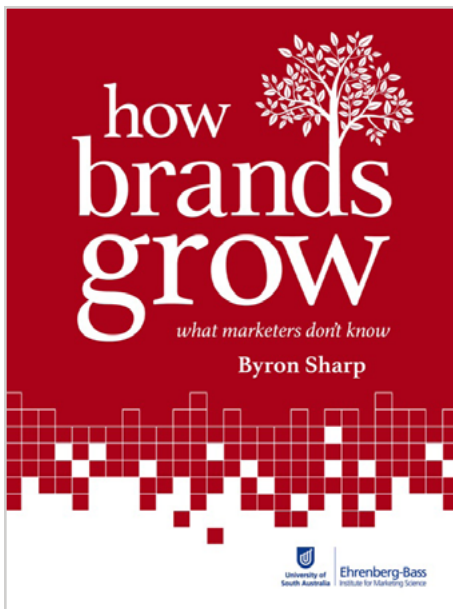
The following principles can be applied to any brand's marketing efforts, however, the manner in which these principles are applied must be tuned to the brand's objectives and audiences.

No brand can just follow a playbook.

That being said, in our decades of building brands, we've noticed that the best brands in the world follow the 7 principles covered in this playbook. These 7 principles are easy to understand, yet difficult to execute.

Why?

Some of them challenge current marketing dogma. Some of them require rigor some teams will not exert. And some require longer time frames than modern marketing departments have come to expect. Your leadership and bravery to follow these principles will set you apart from your peers. Be bold!



WARC



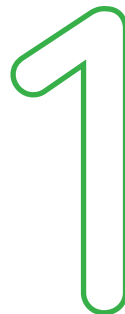
The following 7 principles are based on rigorous research by global leaders in marketing science, neuroscience, brand strategy, and marketing effectiveness over decades of testing and analysis. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their work and it's our mission to share their thinking, through the lens of our decades of hands-on experience, with marketing professionals, entrepreneurs, and brand leaders.

Now, let's get into the 7 principles of billion-dollar brands!

Respect Your Customer.

Know your audience so well ...
you never pander to them.

Audience understanding is at the core of all great brands and marketing campaigns. The challenge to you and your teams for principle number one is to go deeper in your audience understanding so you never pander to them.



We've all seen pandering marketing, it's easy to spot because it stinks.

If the marketing team producing that work actually understood their audience, they would know they were missing the mark. The extra effort will go a long way to building real relationships with your audience.



Cast a Wide Net. Target creative, not your media.

Heresy, we know, but this isn't an opinion, this is marketing science fact proven by dozens of studies. Targeting your media is more expensive and less effective.

Why?

First, ad platform CPMs go up the more you target, and second, your media is less effective because it's speaking to fewer people. The modern ad serving algorithms are built to go after the people most likely to convert, by adding layers of targeting, you're hurting the algorithms chances and increasing your costs. This doesn't mean target the world, but have a really good reason for each additional layer of targeting.

Instead, use your deep audience understanding (Principle #1) to make your creative speak in a strong and clear voice. **Your people will respond.**

(Then you can retarget the responders, but that's a different document. Get in touch to learn more!)

Connect with Emotion.

People post-rationalize purchases.
Focus on selling the feeling.

The marketing adage, “Sell the hole, not the drill” doesn’t go far enough and keeps you trapped in “feature / benefit” messaging. Challenge yourself and your teams to go beyond the practical features and benefits of your product or service, and ***identify the emotional benefit.***



From toothpaste to luxury cars, the buyer is ultimately motivated by an emotional outcome. They may list practical benefits in focus groups or surveys, but this is only a sign-post for you to find the true emotional benefit they are seeking.



Prioritize Growth.

New customers aren't just how a brand grows, it is how a brand survives.

Imagine you're on a pristine beach. Now, scoop up as much sand as you can in cupped hands. Is it possible to keep every grain of sand in your hands or are small rivulet of sand slipping through your fingers?

Now, take this (clunky) metaphor and apply it to your customer base. The sand slipping through your fingers is customer churn, and even the best brands have churn. Customer loyalty is a myth.

Retention and loyalty programs only have a supporting role - to slow churn. Focus your strategies, budgets, and campaigns on bringing in new customers and your brand will grow.

Stand Out in the Crowd.

Attention is the ultimate metric.
Grab attention and you will win.

Principle number 5 is one of our favorites, because it intrinsically ties Principles 1-4 together in an elegant way. “Attention” has many names in the marketing world: Message recall, Top-of-Mind Awareness, Share of Voice, etc., etc.



It all boils down to attention.

Attention, being interesting and creating an emotional response, isn't just good creative practice, it saves you money. Multiple studies show that “safe” dull marketing costs more because you need more impressions to get your message across. Stop wasting your money on frequency and be memorable.

If you're talking to new people, with something they remember, your brand will grow.

Be Different but Familiar.

MAYA is the key to unlocking distinctiveness and grabbing attention.



In the mid-1900s, Raymond Loewy shook the design world with his aerodynamic interpretations of objects from pencil sharpeners to locomotives. His central design principle was MAYA - **Most Advanced, Yet Accepted.**

This principle is just as relevant to brands and marketing. Grabbing and holding attention is about being relevant to your category, while being just different enough to be distinct from the competition.

How do you get there? In addition to understanding your audience (Principle 1) you also need to understand your category and competition, so you can identify distinctive whitespaces for your brand to own.

Consistency is Everything.

If all else fails - use clear, consistent messaging.

At the most basic level, ***a brand is consistency over time.*** Marketers get bored with messages, assets, and campaigns - your audiences rarely, if ever, grow tired of repetition (unless your frequency is too high, but that's a different document.)



Stay consistent with all of your distinctive assets in every message on every channel, and your brand will grow.



So, now you may be asking ... How do I apply this to my marketing?

We're *Star Wars* geeks, so we're going to borrow a framework for you to apply these 7 Principles based on the Machete Order.*

(I would add Rogue One at the beginning and forget about the final trilogy, but that's a topic for another day.)

Whether you're a small company trying to become a brand, a medium-sized brand trying to scale, or a massive enterprise focused on continued dominance and expanding marketing share, **these 7 principles will grow your revenue ...** but the order in which you prioritize them could change ...

* [More info about the Machete Order](#)

Smaller companies

Fast revenue growth and brand foundations Machete Order

- 7 **Consistency is Everything.** For small companies, establishing a clear and consistent identity is foundational. When resources are limited, consistency helps build recognition with minimal waste. Your audience needs to know exactly who you are every time they encounter your brand.
- 4 **Prioritize Growth.** Small companies must focus on acquiring new customers to survive. Your existing customer base isn't large enough to sustain you through natural churn. Growth isn't just a goal—it's your lifeline.
- 2 **Cast a Wide Net.** Contrary to popular advice, hyper-targeting is costly and less effective for smaller companies. Let your creative work speak to your audience and allow ad algorithms to find the right people without expensive targeting layers.
- 1 **Respect Your Customer.** Understand your audience deeply so your limited marketing budget resonates authentically. Small companies can't afford the mistake of pandering or missing the mark with their core audience.
- 3 **Connect with Emotion.** Smaller brands often compete against larger players with more features and lower prices. Your emotional connection is your competitive advantage—focus on how you make customers feel.
- 5 **Stand Out in the Crowd.** With limited visibility, small companies must create memorable impressions. Bold, attention-grabbing marketing saves you money by requiring fewer impressions to make an impact.
- 6 **Be Different but Familiar.** Find your distinctive space within your category. Small companies need a clear point of differentiation while remaining recognizable as part of their category.

Medium-sized brands

Overcoming the performance plateau Machete Order

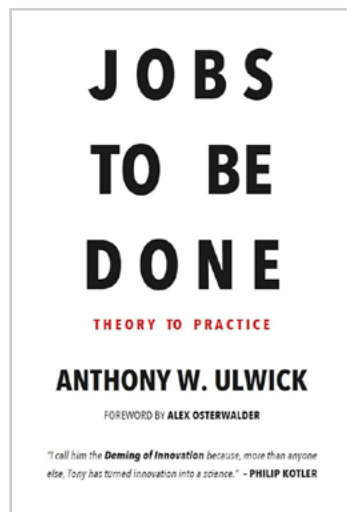
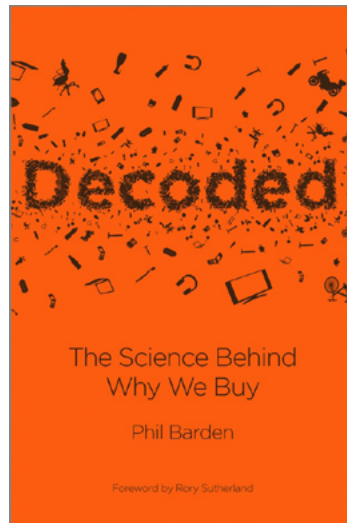
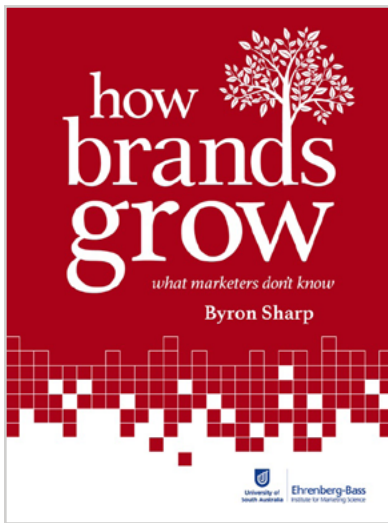
- 2 **Cast a Wide Net.** At this stage, scaling requires reaching new audiences beyond your core. Medium-sized brands have proven their model works—now broaden your reach while letting creative and algorithms do the heavy lifting.
- 4 **Prioritize Growth.** Medium-sized brands often hit plateaus when they over-focus on loyalty programs. Remember that your brand still needs a steady flow of new customers to offset inevitable churn and achieve meaningful growth.
- 3 **Connect with Emotion.** You've established product-market fit, now deepen the emotional connection. Medium-sized brands can start shifting from purely functional benefits to emotional territory that builds stronger brand affinity.
- 1 **Respect Your Customer.** With a growing audience, medium-sized brands must maintain the authenticity that got them here. Your deeper understanding of multiple customer segments allows for more sophisticated but never pandering messaging.
- 5 **Stand Out in the Crowd.** As competition increases at the mid-market level, distinctiveness becomes crucial. Your brand needs to command attention in increasingly crowded spaces to maintain growth momentum.
- 7 **Consistency is Everything.** Having established some recognition, medium-sized brands need to maintain consistency while allowing for strategic evolution. Your base expects consistency but you need flexibility to reach new segments.
- 6 **Be Different but Familiar.** Medium-sized brands can push boundaries a bit more than smaller companies. Apply the MAYA principle to stand out while maintaining category relevance as you compete with both smaller and larger players.

Enterprise

Efficiency at scale Machete Order

- 7 **Consistency is Everything.** Ironically, we would argue that for the largest and smallest companies, consistency is the most important thing to solidify a brand. Small brands need to build memory structures, while enterprise needs to retain and strengthen them.
- 2 **Cast a Wide Net.** The only way to grow as an enterprise brand is to gain new customers. The biggest brands have churn, too, and the larger a category gets, the less customers are loyal.
- 3 **Connect with Emotion.** The biggest brands have the luxury, no responsibility, to use their scale to engage their customers on an emotional level. Until you connect with emotion, you won't join the enterprise club.
- 1 **Respect Your Customer.** This one is a bit different for enterprise, because your "customer" is a melting pot of hundreds of cohorts, demographics, and cultures. Your creative should only be about attracting people to your unique voice, and this is where you need to embrace a superior Customer Experience.
- 4 **Prioritize Growth.** The bigger brands get, the more they feel the pull to build out deep loyalty and retention programs. These programs are fine at slowing churn, but they will never help you grow. Focusing on new customer acquisition is the only way to true growth.
- 6 **Be Different but Familiar.** Enterprise brands must balance their established identity with continued innovation. Your strong brand equity allows you to stretch boundaries while maintaining the core distinctiveness assets your audience recognizes. Use MAYA to evolve without alienating your massive customer base or appearing stagnant to newcomers.
- 5 **Stand Out in the Crowd.** For enterprise brands, standing out means breaking through the noise of your own making. Your category position is often well established, but maintaining mental availability requires continual reinvestment in attention-grabbing creative. As your competitors grow, your share of voice must remain dominant through memorable, distinctive communications.

Recommendations



Essential reading

The most essential books for marketers, entrepreneurs, and brand leaders.

Great podcasts

Some of our favorite weekly podcasts covering strategy, creativity, trends, and most importantly marketing effectiveness.





Book a call with us today to make a revenue growth plan for your company.

We have many ways to share expertise to help you grow.

[Book a Call](#)