

The Intuitive Marketer - An Interview with Pat Grosse

1. Why did you decide to write this book?

Therapy and to help other business owners. During the three year journey described in the book to update my marketing knowledge, I learnt that there's so much out there and there's a lot of pressure to invest in the latest money-making programs and software. It's so easy to get caught in a never ending cycle that leads nowhere. I came across business owners who invested tens of thousands on mentoring, marketing strategies and programs, to find themselves no better off. Yes, there are businesses that do break through the glass ceiling and rocket their way to success, but there are many others left by the wayside.

Many bad decisions business owners make are based on lack of knowledge, It is so easy to get lost in the ever increasing technology revolution, and to focus on social media and online marketing with a complete lack of understanding of the marketing principles they support. Technology has played a part in marketing for a lot longer than people think. I was heavily involved in promoting information technology back in the 1990s and was using webinars in the early 2000s. The book explores online technology as only one element of the marketing puzzle. Writing the book was therapeutic in that it put my experience into context and helped me to unpack what I already knew and to identify the real gaps. It also gave me clarity to develop a focussed marketing framework to help business owners gain some insights into putting together an effective marketing and knowledge acquisition plan.

2. What do you see as the main challenges facing business owners and their approaches to marketing?

Many people start businesses based on their technical skills. They enjoy using those skills and may have a ready-made market at first. Marketing might not be a priority or they put together a cheap website and a social media account to promote the business. They don't get the success they expect because their number one barrier is that they do not have a customer-focused mindset which reflects on what they're promoting, who they are (or aren't) targeting, how and the language they use.

A good customer experience is vital, but there are a lot of business owners who are not building or using an effective customer database. The book explains why this is not a new concept and the importance of customer databases. Even single-sale businesses can find ways to value-add and package follow-up services if they think creatively. We have come across business owners and employees who have blocked the use of CRM databases and autoresponders through lack of skills and fear of technology.

It is astonishing how many product as well as service companies do not know how to differentiate themselves from the competition. The online marketplace in particular is overcrowded with businesses trying to shout louder than the competition to grab attention. Some days reading social media posts feels like being on the trade floor of a stock exchange. Yet there is opportunity to stand out with some creative thinking. We have worked with trades businesses who have successfully differentiated themselves by harnessing their latent skills such as writing information guides for their websites, taking risks and coming up with unique customer experiences.

As the economy changes and with a focus on supporting entrepreneurial start-ups, the need for differentiation is even more vital if these businesses are to survive. The concept of entrepreneurship is being promoted heavily, yet I suspect the real difference between success and failure will be the ability to think and act creatively.

3. Looking into the future – what challenges and opportunities will be available for business owners to market their products and services?

Information technology will not go away. It's been with us too long for that to happen. It's vital that business owners become more adept at automation of marketing systems because if they don't somebody else will with consequent cost, time and resource savings. Digital literacy will be a must for survival. However, the need for creative ways to improve customer experience will be just as important. The 21st century consumer is choosier than previous generations, so business owners must be able to offer something special to stay ahead of the competition. Niche marketing will become even more intense as a result.

4. What are the three main areas that a business owner should focus on to increase sales and/or customers?

The first area of focus is to have an effective customer database and system for engaging, nurturing, selling and servicing customers. This system must be able to collect feedback so that the business can listen and consistently improve its products and services to keep and grow its customer base.

Secondly, an exceptional customer experience will require risk taking, especially if what the business owner is doing is new. Customers don't need to know about the risks, as long as they witness something remarkable. These people become raving fans and will tell their colleagues and friends. This works as long as the service remains consistent.

Most important of all, build in a marketing strategy from the start of the business is vital. Don't rely on a business model that over time leads to a decreasing customer base or irrelevant and out of date products and services.

5. Why should we listen to you? What makes you any different from other marketing 'experts'?

I am a business owner with a background in the influence of information technology on society and have experienced both success and hard times. Where I am different from many of today's 'experts' is that I have developed and maintained a long-term respect for technology. As a young mum, I picked up work in the emerging customer database evolution opened up by easier access to computing systems. I was involved in promoting opportunities arising from "The Information Super Highway" back in the 1990s, at a time when DVD format videos were still 18 months from breakthrough. I've maintained my technology knowledge in the education space in the 2000s with webinars and e-learning platforms and more recently the business arena with the impacts of social media on business. I have over 30 years' first-hand experience of the impact of technology as a 'tool' for marketing. It's this respect that has enabled me to thread its influence, whilst maintaining the integrity of the 'other' components of marketing. If people want context, I can provide it in bucket loads.

6. How do we contact you?

See below



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