

Standing out in a disruptive landscape

Ahhh, the challenges and excitement of the digital revolution where disruption abounds. Where the rate of change is so swift that each day starts with the question 'what's going to be the new thing that wasn't around yesterday'.

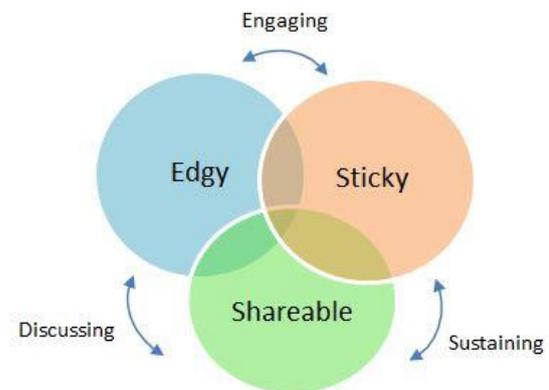
With so many new things coming into existence and with so much noise calling out and seeking our attention, we are faced with the increasing challenge of how to get noticed? And once we get noticed how do we then engage with and keep this attention? How can we better remembered? How can we improve the means by which our customers share information about us with their social networks?

There are two areas in which I believe we can respond to these challenges - the first is that of socialability and how we can get more of what we do to be part of the everyday conversation within social networks, informal conversations and even in media. The second relates to our attitude. This second area is discussed in another resource but as a prelude the notion of attitude focuses around how we develop the inner fortitude and talent to stand out, and related to this is the message and offering we want to share with others ... the essence of niche that I'll be discussing.

With regards socialability I believe this by this is made up by our ability to be sticky, shareable and edgy as illustrated by the following model.

Shareable

Being shareable has so many facets to it. In essence being shareable is about how you create the motivation whereby people want to share things about you. Research highlights that anywhere up to 88% of people will be influenced more by what other people say about an organisation than what that organisations says about itself. This is the power of the tribe as promoted by Seth Godin.



Whether you call these people supporters, advocates or champions they all have the potential to share 'something about 'you'. Whether they actually do share this something is up to the experience and value they receive.

If we consider that the experience a customer receives generates a certain level of energy then a satisfactory experience is seen as neutral - that is, the energy generated isn't of a level that evokes any 'rave' factor. *It was ok*. But if this experience was quite poor then people are more likely to experience a rush of energy and start sending out any number of negative comments including complaints. Conversely a highly positive experience motivates a customer to speak in favour of you, to be an advocate.



Providing a positive experience is one way to increase your shareability. Another way is to do good for others and let your customers know about this. There are an increasing number of companies who are wanting to do good for others. Peter Baines does some great work in this space - read his his blog on '[Doing Good by Doing Good](#)' or his book by the same title [here](#).

Another example is the Cotton On Group (as in the Cotton On retail brand) who looks to share the good work it is doing through the Cotton On Foundation and in particular the \$35million provided to 20,000 educational places in Southern Uganda. They also look to engage and share their culture with suppliers to provide a better integration between the different entities.

Standing out through being shareable also applies to internal communications and how organisations benefit by a sharing and open communication model that facilitates not just corridor conversations but strategic chats, facilitated discussions and in the boardroom without fear of reprimand.

Sticky

Imagine you are doing a web search and when you land on the 5th webpage in your search you find yourself spending longer on this page. You do not just click through as you did with the previous 4 pages but are lured into spending more time surfing the page for longer, clicking through to explore additional information and perhaps even bookmarking the site to come back to at a later time. This is an example of something being sticky. That is, you want to spend some more time 'sticking around' rather than moving on.

The Heath brothers wrote a best selling book by a similar title called '[Made to Stick](#)'. In this book they share a number of techniques to increase the probability that an idea will have a lasting impact and that we can also apply when seeking to stand out. They base their book around the themes of: Unexpected, Concrete, Credible, Emotional and Story.

Some of these include doing the provocative such as the Nobel Prize-winning scientist (Barry Marshall) who drank a glass of bacteria to convince people that he and his colleague Robin Warren had discovered that bacteria was the cause of stomach ulcers, and that it was possible to cure stomach ulcers rather than just treat the symptoms.

Edgy

If we were on the edges of our seats I'm going to to make a calculated assumption and say that we were engaged. And the same in a wider context - do something that is edgy and people will be engaged. Do something edgy that is relevant and not only will they be engaged, they'll be drawn into an on-going relationship.

Some businesses have been edgy by taking responsibility for their actions - they do not look to deny or excuse themselves from the quality of any service or product they provide. Instead, if this quality is below customer expectations they take it on themselves to fix the situation.

To stand out do something

A key theme in amongst the elements of shareable, sticky and edgy is that if we are to stand out then we can not stand still. We need to take action - a practice which has led to the concept of progressionism vs perfectionism, and how progressionism is often a more effective strategy for yielding results. Progressionism promotes the need to do something and get a move on rather than just standing still and waiting till everything is perfect. If we do the latter there's a good chance we'll be made to stand aside as the market moves right on past.