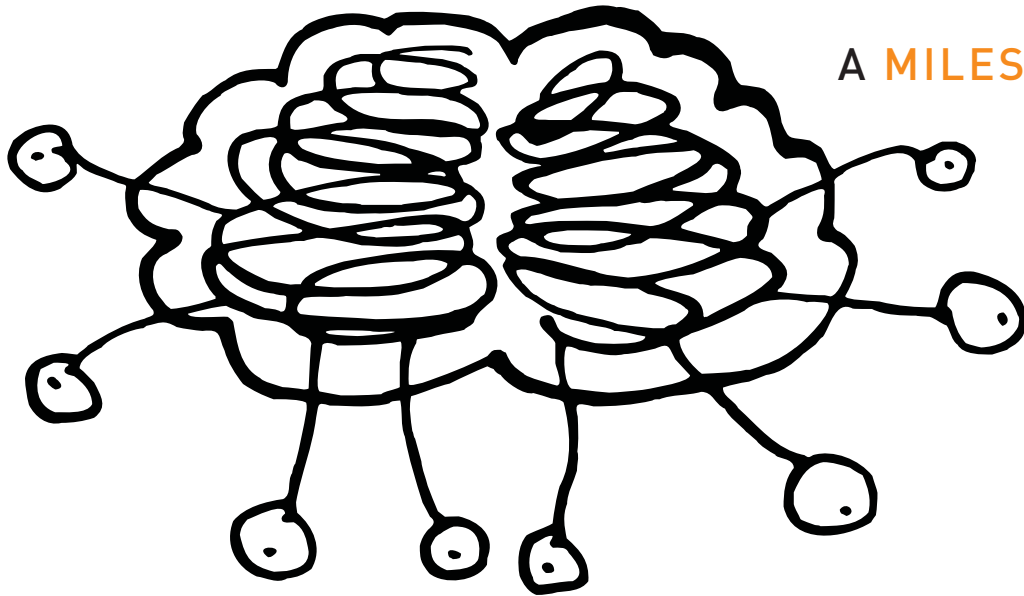


# IS B2B MARKETING BORING?

IAN SUTTON



A MILESTONE BRAINSTORM



**MILESTONE** STRATEGIC DESIGN  
CREATING BRANDS, BUILDING BUSINESSES

**At Milestone we've never really liked the B2B, B2C labels that companies have adopted to describe their business and consumer markets.**

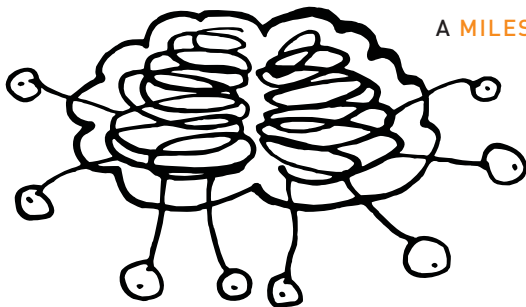
Anything that implies that businesses are not real people is bad in our book. We're all customers, whether we're shopping from our office or home. And we all want to be treated like customers whether we're spending our own hard earned cash or our company budget.

Yes, B and C are useful ways to identify separate market sectors but why does business focussed marketing often end up being so boring.

Business lifestyle photography has moved on from the days of the ubiquitous 'handshake' shot but there's still plenty of companies churning out the old cliches and straplines that include the words 'for all your xyz needs'.

At Milestone we know that customers in suits may have a slightly different agenda but we challenge the notion that they are all boring or respond to boring communications.

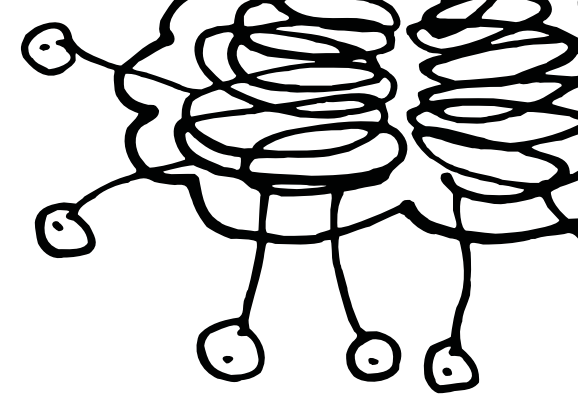
**SO...**



A MILESTONE BRAINSTORM

# 20

## THOUGHTS ON B2B MARKETING AND NOT BEING BORING



### 1 WHY BUSINESSES CAN'T AFFORD TO BE BORING

It's a competitive world. To attract and retain the best customers and employees you can't afford to be boring. Exciting, emotive brands are everywhere and in order to compete with them you've got to be one better. Personality pays.

### 2 SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Because most businesses products are all the same, customers need a clear sign to see why yours are better. What makes you obviously different from your competition?

### 3 THE POWER OF LOVE

Business deals are about relationships. Relationships are about love. How does passion manifest itself in your business? Passion is never boring.

### 4 PRICE vs QUALITY

If you're not spending your own money you are more likely to be interested in quality than price. You can always justify spending more if the return is greater. Does your business say quality in everything it does?

### 5 TIME IS MONEY

People have less time to make decisions. Strong brands help people make decisions quickly by ticking off the various boxes for them. How fast does your business communicate exactly what it does?

### 6 HEAD AND HEART

Business customers weigh up business brands just like they do in the high street. Will it do the job (head)? Will it make me look good (heart)? PO raised! Does your brand tick both boxes?



## 7 WORD OF MOUTH

Viral marketing is the way to spread your message free of charge. How do you make colleagues want to share information about your business? Give them a good story to tell. People are always interested in gossip – the more way out the better!

## 8 WHO'S YOUR CUSTOMER?

There's a big difference between a senior procurement professional and junior administrator yet both can be responsible for buying your product. How do you tailor your message to make it engaging for a broad range of customer profiles?

FDs may care more about cost, MDs may be more concerned with achieving their goals. How often is your customer just be looking for an easy life.

## 9 LESS IS MORE

The 80/20 rule says 80% of your business will come from 20% of your customers. Could you focus your offering to strengthen your proposition?

## 10 FRESHEN UP

We're all aware we're living in a fast moving world. We expect a certain pace of change. Invigorate your staff and customers with new ideas on a regular basis.

## 11 BRANDS ARE ABOUT BUYING

Building a stronger brand means you won't have to sell as hard.

## 12 TRUST YOUR FEELINGS

What feelings do we expect from a business purchase? They may be different from buying a new pair of shoes but we expect an emotional pay-off whenever we shop.

I want to feel valued, important, safe, responsible, astute, innovative... Does your business deliver some of these feelings to its customers.

## 13 BRAND AND DELIVER

A brand is a promise of an experience. In service industries delivering the customer experience is everything. Does yours match the promise at every stage of the customer journey?

## 14 GREEN IS GOOD

Thankfully the environment isn't boring any more. Developing and communicating sound CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) credentials is now an essential part of your brand. The scope for innovation in this field is enormous. What is your business doing for the environment? Don't wait for your customers to ask the question.

# 20 15-19

**15 TAKE A STAND**  
Start a debate. Champion a cause. Raise an issue. Sponsor something great. Customers are engaged by businesses that take a stand on something relevant to them. Don't be afraid to have a bit of fun. In business, people need more fun.

**16 TRY A NEW PERSPECTIVE**  
In order to make a creative leap you've got to think like a child. To forget any preconceptions and to imagine that nothing is impossible. To ask what if? What would you do if you were a different type of brand?  
Imagine you are Innocent Drinks, Apple or Richard Branson.

**17 BETTER BY DESIGN**  
The phenomenal success of products like Dyson vacuum cleaners, Apple ipods and the new Mini confirm our love and understanding of exciting design. Are you investing in innovative design or going the way of Rover?

**18 PURCHASING POWER**  
The rising role of procurement and buying best practice has an impact on our message. What are the issues for business purchasing?

- Trust and reliability
- Cost negotiation
- Reducing the number of suppliers
- Service level agreements
- Using specialists
- Measurement and evaluation of ROI

**19 B2B2C**  
Many consumer products are bought, recommended or distributed by other businesses before they reach the consumer. Does this third party business's perception of your brand match that of the end customer? This business audience could be your biggest brand champion or not at all. Is your message getting through?

**20 GOOD IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH**  
Good is ordinary. Ordinary is boring. To stand out from the crowd you need to be amazing. Remember, being risky is the new safe!

