

Flooding the market?

Andrew Scott argues that marketing should be the ‘roof’ that future-proofs your business in an adverse climate

Hands up – who would consider starting a UK-based business at the moment? If you’re not already up to your neck trying to work out how to pay those extra National Insurance employee contributions heading your way in April, you’ve got the problem of a flat economy, increased labour and material costs and the spectre of creeping inflation, a rapidly changing world situation that has an impact on businesses large and small. Of course, there is no optimum time to start a business, but 2025 really doesn’t feel like the moment to reach for the stars and become your own boss.

Or does it? The nature of entrepreneurship always favours those who see opportunities, not problems. If you really want to build something of your own, so the wisdom goes, then get on with it, because there is no time like the present. Recently I was in the United States for a four-day marketing conference. And what spare time I had was spent marvelling at the optimism of everyone I met, from marketing gurus to the guy behind the coffee shop counter. Everyone seemed naturally equipped with a desire to please the customer above all else. Whatever we might think of America now, this attitude seems hard-wired into the psyche.

Of course, we cannot and should not be blindly optimistic. The challenges to businesses worldwide are too huge to ignore; only proper planning and a decent dose of realism will see the prospective business owner through the innumerable challenges. That said, we must also remember that setting up and scaling a business is always exciting – especially when the odds are stacked against you.

One of the biggest challenges business owners face is working out their priorities. Whilst you are concentrating on your core offering, you are also being pulled in multiple directions – managing cash flow, sourcing materials, hiring employees, finding suitable premises – oh, and marketing too, if you’ve got the time.

Unfortunately, many business people do what I’ve just done in that last paragraph and put marketing last. Wrong! If anything, you need to make marketing your number one priority after dealing with your core offering. You can sell as much of a service or create as many widgets as you like, but if you aren’t marketing what you do, you simply won’t have any customers.

Recent research shows that UK marketing budgets have increased by the highest levels in a decade, demonstrating the importance of marketing for firms of all stripes. Yet many small businesses simply don’t have a formal marketing strategy in place. To my mind, that’s plain mad. Where will your customers come from, if you don’t reach out to them via marketing?

So let’s look at marketing this way: think of your business as a house. Your product or service forms the foundation, your operations are the walls and your marketing is the roof that protects everything beneath.



Andrew Scott

Without a watertight ‘marketing roof’, your business is at the mercy of competitive elements. Sales dry up when downpours of market challenges arrive, and your hard work elsewhere becomes compromised.

My own marketing company, Purplex, has created a lot of marketing roofs, for the simple reason that businesses just can’t do it all. We know what juggling priorities is about, and we understand that outsourcing to specialists like us means you’ll receive a top-class marketing strategy without having to devise and run it yourself. In the long term this will save you time, money and an awful lot of headaches.

Sometimes it’s not even a case of priorities. A lot of businesses do wonderful things but struggle to communicate their value effectively. And a great idea stays a great idea until it gets an audience. We work with firms to ensure that every element of their marketing strategy is robust and interconnected, from websites and social media presence to brand identity and customer communications.

Like a house, your marketing needs regular maintenance and occasional renovation. Keeping your strategy on its toes is a proven way of improving your growth prospects, and if anything will pull your business out of the stagnant climate we’re in. It is about knowing that you’re on course to build a better, brighter future. □

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