A BOOK ON BRANDING, NOT A CHECKLIST

Strategy is not Planning

By **Tyler Dorsey** · CEO of VIIBrook, pronounced *Vai-brook*

“There is no such thing as strategic planning. A strategy is a theory, not a checklist.”

A note on the examples in this book: the Crimson Falcons and the yacht brokerage are illustrative examples, not real companies. The vegan food company example is real.

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What is VIIBrook?

VIIBrook is an acronym for my working relationship with companies I help grow. The acronym stands for:

VII: 7 Steps For Branding

Basic Theory | Refinement | Observations | Opportunities | Knowledge

What I know is that companies come to me and they always want to focus on more and new customers, they want to improve their brand. But serving them without observing some of the basic principles in their business gives little to no control on how the brand can expand. A brand can define your marketing and advertising but must be complimentary to your sales process and business model.

If you are a new company, this will serve as a checklist. If you are an existing company, this will serve as an audit.

Let's talk about what this is going to look like working on this "branding" stuff. The feeling, emotions and the results that will come from going through these exercises. Most importantly, let's set a good tone for our relationship and how things will play out as we progress through the guides I lay out.

By focusing on the exercises you will find an incredible amount of opportunity of growth. Quite literally you will actually define the destiny of the company and your life as you want it to be. This might sound very esoteric, but what I truly mean is that this will not only be a gratifying experience for you, but for the people that you employ and the clients you serve.

There will be complete symbiosis between all three elements of your company, the business model, the product or service, and the clients.

This is truely how a good company is run. I think when we look at capitalism, what we often think is that if boiled down to its simplest form, it is simply moving money from one hand to

another. It's a vehicle for transactions, and if looked at objectively, with singularity, it would be rather transactional.

Oftentimes this is the case when I work with companies, they are moving through their client business relationships from a transactional sense. Unless it's actually a consumable product, or even sometimes when the product is, the relationship between a consumer and brand is as fleeting as the dating world.

Someone gets something in exchange for their time, money, and effort and they get what they want when they want it. But as we exist, if there lacks any value, then what becomes something that feeds the consumerism of the relationship, as soon as something more attractive, that can give and promise more comes along, the consumer is onto the next.

Now how do we actually change this without just saying "well let's have consumers who have an innate nature of being loyal". After all, disloyalty is not a trait of just the disloyal. And loyalty is not just a trait of the loyal.

We cannot train someone to just be loyal as our customers, and we cannot only serve the "Loyal" consumer market and still survive.

Here lies the common problem with many companies, a multifaceted problem. How do I produce something that consumers loyally believe in and purchase, without running out of an audience I serve and preventing a plateau in my business.

We see lots of businesses who become multifaceted in this approach which I will get into, or large umbrella companies, with multiple subsets of companies and brands to ensure their consumer base is actually loyal, without having to make the consumer believe they are being loyal to a singular brand. This is actually a symbiotic relationship, but can oftentimes be perceived as deceptive. You'll often hear that it is perceived as an 'illusion of choice".

The truth is, if your company can solve a problem, and the buck stops there you must either let go of the idea there will never be some kind of plateau to a certain target audience, or accept the adaptability needed to foster a lifetime relationship with your audience. I truly believe this to be a universal truth, even with a consumable product.

So, you are coming here because you are anywhere on this graph and you're wondering how to solve this problem.

FIRST.

A problem is only a problem, if you are comfortable with having it. A problem goes unsolved, only if you find comfort in it.

So the focus throughout our working relationship is that what we are doing is simply creating a practice, that is to be followed, that may never actually solve all of your problems, but will solve your current problem, which will in turn create a new problem. Growth is fun like that.

The fallacy of a life or business without problems must be let go of, we are simply trading our problems for other problems, and the goal of improvement is that the problems will get smaller, we can handle them better, knowing that they will never fully go away.

SECOND.

There is a massive difference between strategy and planning. There is no such thing as strategic planning.

A strategy is a theory. I cannot and will not tell you what your strategy will be, and this is a good thing.

You will actually learn how to strategize without the need of me, or hopefully less and less the need of me ever again.

But, what I can tell you is that if you do not practice getting good at “strategy”, but instead make decisions based on every time a new idea pops into your head, the further away you will get from finding a direction to go.

Let’s talk about this graph and where you may be at, and how you might have gotten here.

You are somewhere on this journey, and I’m going to literally use this as an example of your profits. If you’re looking at this thinking “this looks nothing like my business”, yes it does, and you’re simply not looking at the data from far back enough, or forward enough, or inside enough.

And I’m going to explain what I believe may be “you” based on the numbers I’m showing.

Obviously this graph is showing you as making the MOST PROFIT EVER YAY! If you feel like you’re at 6, but there’s an inference that that will one day go down, maybe down all the way back to one, maybe down part ways, but it will almost certainly (if ever) go down.

Imagine, if I gave you the option to never go up again, but simply plateau at the top, would you be happy?

If the answer is no, then things must change, you are uncomfortable with where you are at and want to go higher, that is ok, but things must change. If you are uncomfortable with change, the only other two options are to plateau (give or take some regular increase) or go down for a little while.

Don't think that this is me specifically targeting you, or saying I'm some oracle and I know what's going to happen before you do, because I am not.

But there's some basic laws that may apply here, again this is theory, those two laws are inertia and gravity.

What goes up must come down.

And an object in motion will stay in motion unless acted upon by an outside force.

But I do not believe that this is something profound either. I actually believe that this is something that can be easily explained and seen in the marketplace.

Take for instance a local brick and mortar location.

They have factors that influence where they are on the graph that can be quite cyclical. Though the patterns may not repeat themselves exactly, they may have a pattern.

Their market consists of two audiences, the local market and the tourism market. Their transactions must take place in the store.

The seasons affect consumerism for the local market and the target market. Their inventory if tracked correctly will dictate what they sell.

Their promotions, marketing and advertising will influence how much traffic they get.

And lastly, so long as people who have money who want to buy what they sell, and are aware they exist, will enter their sales process, and be provided something either once or multiple times.

The sum of this would relate to overall customer feeling of satisfaction, both long and short term.

Influencing the satisfaction is something I will touch upon later, and all of these things can be influenced but never controlled.

Now, let's say they wanted to exponentially increase and change their numbers. What we know is that one, or many of these elements I just explained must be altered, and tested to either decrease or increase their results.

That is why this is theory. So how do we pick which one we want to change to try to influence our results?

We actually have to start from the beginning. I'm going to go into the example more and list off each number, hopefully not getting sidetracked.

What this really is is an archive. So, if you're at 1, we have limited hard data. Only the data that is readily available to us from third parties.

If you are at 6, we have a plethora of data, this data is so specific and should be able to help us get as close as possible to predictability. Here's what I know to be true, if you are a six, you can do more of what you know works from your data and keep doing that to create a cycle in your business. A cycle that will grow with time and practice.

Some people really just want a cycle, with the belief that it is more manageable.

Stage One: Strategy, THEN Planning. NOT "strategic planning"

If you are at a 1, you are at the point of limited to no data. This is especially tricky with an emerging product or emerging market.

There may be absolutely no data available or there may be lots of data available from a lot of other companies that are absolutely dominating.

So if you are at "one", here's what I believe to be your truth;

You either need to be doing some or all of these things. (attention 2-6's, this is actually relevant to you too, so listen up)

Your options as I see them, are as follows if you are at a 1.

1. You can use the data in the existing marketplace to determine what EXISTING audiences are available to you, which in turn will determine what your unique value proposition is, which will in turn define what your most valuable product or service is, which will in turn influence your business model. The results will influence your general feelings towards your business, not the other way around.
2. You can use the data in the marketplace to CREATE what your audience is, which will in turn determine what your unique value proposition is, which will in turn define what your most valuable product or service is, which will in turn influence your business model. Your feelings towards the market will influence your results.

This is why branding is so important. It goes way beyond the colors and style of the logo you choose.

So you can either look at things as subjective or objective if you are at a 1. This can be extremely overwhelming.

When people think about creating (which entrepreneurs are good at doing) they often think, “Ok if my product solves a problem then it will work.”. So they pick all these problems their audience has and then they try to solve them with products or services. Oftentimes this leads to an evolution of the product, and in the end they may never end up solving the problem at the original starting point, as the problems and audiences get more defined. For example; social media, people already had a means of communication, it was more interpersonal, it was letters and community and telephones and televisions. But it wasn’t ever a computer.

When facebook was created the problem they solved was connection, communication, and community, but i don't think that anyone could have predicted that what their most valuable product would be. Their most valuable product is data.

Now in exchange for people's attention which has become commoditized, they gather data and that is what their most valuable product is. The problem they solve feeds into another product, and their target audience from a business perspective shifted (but never went away) that they solve a problem for advertisers, and a problem for their users.

Their company became multifaceted over time. I often see this happening with entrepreneurs.

For example, I had spoken to an entrepreneur recently who is working with his local government agency on creating rules around health insurance to cover post chemo treatments for neuropathy.

See; if you get cancer, and go through chemo, and you start experiencing neuropathy, that is it. You simply would have to go through pain management for your neuropathy symptoms.

Alternative solutions like stem cell therapy, are an out of pocket expense.

While this incredibly intelligent entrepreneur was trying to help his audience of people who suffer from neuropathy from a simply holistic perspective by introducing legislation to enforce the financial support of therapeutic treatments for neuropathy, what they actually ended up creating was an incredible way to attract patients who experience neuropathy from all sorts of treatments, illnesses and diseases.

They created an incredible sales process for patients to find doctors, and a market for those with a medical background to serve more people, and change their focus.

Simply as a byproduct of trying to solve a problem in the marketplace.

I'm still not sure they even know the true power of what they are doing, but this is another example of how we have to be open to change and once we are, opportunity follows.

This hopefully should encourage you that if you do have a new product or service, that you may never know it's true potential if you solely focus on the challenges that you experience as you start up, and if you only look at them as roadblocks or failures, you may be missing the larger vision of the company that you have.

I will go more in depth about how this may affect where you are at. In the final chapters, I will go into how to strategize your audiences.

Let's go back to the graph and we can actually try to "Crystal ball" what will happen after you're past stage 1.

Stage Two: The problems that don't really exist

Stage 2 often doesn't mean any hard or fast changes in your Product, Service, Sales Process, Audience, Marketing, Branding, Customer Satisfaction, or Quality.

Sorry, let me clarify, to ME they may not feel like hard or fast changes, but in the grand scheme of things, they will be changed and appear smaller over time.

But there almost certainly has been adjustments, this is because as you began to collect data, and went away from basing your theory off other data or just plain feelings, you have actual reference points of data to help guide your decisions on what to change and tweak.

Here is where most business owners should just stay investing in the small adjustments and changes they made.

What I often find, is once businesses are at point two, they count their chickens before they've hatched.

Not in a naive way, but in the sense that they typically will come to this psychological conclusion; "When I change things, things change, and for the better."

This isn't really wrong and it's not really right.

Now I'm not saying change is bad, this is typically a good thing, but if you're not giving your changes TIME to see how they affect the business, you will be in grave trouble.

So if you are at the point of stage two my advice is simple, again I'm not a seer or oracle, this is just my theory.

You are onto something. Do not make hard or fast changes or decisions based on feelings. At this point, you must wait for one thing and that is data.

How much data? You might be asking. Keep getting data until sales slow down or you plateau.

If the data is coming in slowly, you can try to increase the data from one thing and one thing only, spend more money on the things that are working to see how long it will take for it to begin slowing down.

It should not come to a hard stop. This is inertia. The forces working against the increase in profitability simply exist, you must just examine them, without letting them influence your decisions.

Simply collect more data at this point so that you can be prepared for WHEN you need to make a decision, but things should not be uncomfortable from a gross profit standpoint. If you have variable costs that increase, this may *feel* like it's taking a lot of money from you, but if your net profit from a percentage standpoint is not dramatically dropping, you must change nothing.

Simply invest in ways to put more data into your process. And wait.

This is a very very challenging thing for entrepreneurs to do, they often have challenges focusing. It's because they are creators, and the standstill of waiting can feel counterintuitive to progress.

I'll give you an example of a client that I had worked with in the past that experienced this and how it can absolutely cloud your vision.

I had a client who had a platform that would connect vegans with recipes that they could cook.

The theory of this business was that there's an audience who wants to improve their health and were not aware that vegan food could be easy or delicious to make.

So what they did is they created content around this to attract that audience without truly defining it.

Over time they left the results alone, continuing to make content and gather more data.

When instructed to put more data into the sales process, they had taken their audience and broken it down into 10 audience subsets they discovered through their buyer data, to target through paid advertising. Up until this point they had not experienced acquisition of clients

through paid advertising at all, so naturally they were nervous, as their cost per acquisition went from zero, to X. Meaning we didn't know how much it would cost to acquire a client.

Their platform was rather inexpensive, at about $50/mo I believe (this was australian dollars).

They created one ad that went to ten audiences to put people into their sales process. I will not describe their sales process for the sake of integrity and also because it just plain does not matter for this point I'm trying to make.

Once they had spent just $1000, on the ten audiences, $100 each audience, they had profited four new clients.

The average lifetime value of their clients was about 5 months, or $250. So in their minds they've somewhat broken even.

This was a disaster to them. Who spends $1000 to *maybe* make $1000? If anyone quits they've lost money!

So they had come to me stating that they were going to change their sales process entirely for paid ads.

Once we opened up their ads manager we realized that one of the ten audiences resulted in 100% of the sales.

Which means, they spent $100, to realize a $100 profit on their new signups, and an upside potential of $900 if their average attrition rate maintained throughout the clients lifetime.

This was great. We went from possibly being in the negative to possibly gaining a 10X return on ad spend.

Secondarily, they still had acquired leads, not just buyers from the other 9 audiences. Not *all* of them, but some of them. So they identified a cost per lead per audience as well.

This gives us the possibility to further increase profitability on the other audiences if they had proper followup and could get them into the program.

Lastly, this gave us guidance on which audiences became their most valuable audience, which audiences require nurturing, and which audiences are what I would call "emerging" future audiences. Because the audiences were chosen from an existing database.

So there's nothing to really *create* at this juncture, there's simply a set of new problems to solve, that would NOT disrupt the existing working machine that they had.

Okay, example over.

Let's go back to the graph, hopefully some of you are familiar with these scenarios I'm describing to you as a brand strategist and are beginning to understand that the brand is never something that stays static (stays the same), it must be dynamic, in a controlled, smooth and deliberate manner.

Stage Three: The plateau of lack of evolution

I know what you're thinking with this statement in the title.

What the fuck, you just told me not to change anything and to collect data, now you're telling me I'm failing because I'm plateuing from not evolving?

Yes.

But, not in a critical way, this is how growth works. Think about a regular routine, it's boring and familiar.

If you've ever worked in a regular hourly job you know this, if your tasks were the same every day, you'll naturally follow them, even on autopilot, and after adapting to them, may actually neglect the things that you should be doing, and are not.

So this stage doesn't have one diagnosis as to why the plateau happens. But remember the three scenarios I explained earlier?

Your business naturally will either keep going up, go down or plateau.

Plateau is not a bad word. I never actually understood why people perceived it as one.

It simply means that it's not going up or down. If profits are coming in, at the same rate, with the similar variable costs, then a bank account should be growing right?

Isn't that the whole idea behind "passive income"?

So you have quite a few paths to choose from here. And I'm going to play it out in three scenarios.

1. Door number one: Nothing changes, 5 years from now everything stays the same, and the money comes in. Happy?
2. Door number two: Something changes, you risk it either going down or up, and the money comes in. Happy?
3. Door number three: You do something entirely different. Abandon this or let it run on autopilot and start somewhere else. Happy?

This is why strategy is mostly theory, because you're likely at number 2.

If you're thinking about #3, then the "next" thing might not be something complementary to what you're doing now at all, and often comes from boredom, or some desire to do something you missed from the past, or "always dreamed" of doing.

If the bank account is lined up enough, please, take path number 3. You'll learn a lot about yourself.

At this point, I may have talked you out of being a customer of mine yet, or possibly at all.

Especially if you're like "I'll be damned, you're right. I'm gonna keep doing what works!". More power to ya!

Luckily, I've worked with enough businesses to know that if you're that person, you're probably really just in stage 2 and don't know it yet.

So, my best possible guess is that if you're still reading or watching, you're likely going to pick door number 2.

Let's go down the path of door number 2.

I'm going to ask us to begin the evaluation of the following.

Your Target Audience: Define them, unwaveringly, completely devoid of your feelings. Turn your emotions off, and feelings off. If you cannot answer them or feel like your answer is

incomplete for any reason, that is absolutely ok, in fact, I'd love for you to feel that way, because the more you admit you do not have full control over the problems that exist, the more completely the answer to solve them will be. Let's begin:

Product: Who is it for? What is your product? When do people need it? Why do they buy it? How do they know a product like yours exists?

Service: Who is your service for? What problem is it solving? When do people need it? Why do they buy it? How do they know a service like yours exists?

Sales Process: How does someone go from never having heard of you, all the way to becoming the best client who's spent the most money with you? You may be thinking of a real example of this. What is each tiny individual part of the sales process? Think of it, as point A being the starting point, and point B being the finishing point, add as many steps as you think are in between until someone gets from point A to being point B.

Audience: Try not to project your feelings onto this part. Do not use the words typically. Simply list all that you know about every square inch of this. Who is your audience? What "stuff" do they like and consume already? What gender are they? Who is your youngest client, and who is your oldest client? How old are all of your clients? How much money do they make? Where do they live? What do they do for work? What state of mind are they in?

Marketing: What assets do you have? What are marketing assets that are humans? What are marketing assets that are tangible? What are they digitally? Are they email, social media, phone calls, conversations in person, events? What is everything that you define as something that markets you, analog or digital?

Customer Satisfaction: Do not use profits to define this. How happy are your clients? Do they give your products good ratings? Do they recommend them to friends? Do they use some of the products? What parts do they use? What parts do they not use? Do they buy it again? Do they stay clients for long? How long? Do they like your team? Do they like you after buying from you?

There's a reason why we're going through these hard to answer questions, and the reason is that you're beginning to understand what your brand is through the answers to these questions.

If you do not have answers to these questions, then you need to get data. This is not a daunting task, in fact, most of the businesses I work with typically have most if not all of this data, if you don't, do not worry, it is not complicated to get. If you do, then good news is that your feelings might not be completely off from what the data may dictate.

What comes next is that you're going to have to actually dive into what each of these things mean for you.

Let's get an example together.

I have a friend who has a business where they help their clients improve marketing.

This is a good business, profitable and sells improvement and opportunity well. The market is heavily saturated, and they have a great reputation in the marketplace.

But once things started plateauing, they decided from a feeling that the amount of work they were putting in should translate to more money.

Instead of turning things on autopilot, they decided they wanted to introduce more services.

There's really two ways that this can go, you can either be a solver of many people's few problems, or a solver or many problems to a few people.

Now there absolutely can be a symbiotic relationship between the two, but again, unless there is focus on making 100% sure you can maintain the machine that is plateauing and afford to add focus, what you would simply be doing is splitting your audience apart.

This distraction cost millions.

So what do we do?

What I believe is the correct thing to do, would be starting all the way from the beginning of the customer journey, and dive fully into the audiences that you serve.

Who they are, how they got where they are, how and why they will discover you and how you can make sure that this happens.

Let’s go back to the example of the vegan diet company I worked with.

Recall how they had 10 audiences, but one of them produced 100% of return on investment immediately and the other 9 audiences did not?

The 9 unprofitable audiences are not a loss, as they were either nurture or “emerging” future buyers.

Well, you can actually go further back, to a buyer that does not even identify themselves as a buyer *yet*, which we will touch upon at the end of the book.

We have a full plate of opportunity right in front of us. We don’t need to go to the “invention required” stage.

So what we would typically do at this stage is we’d look at the nine other audiences and we’d define a pathway for them.

We can do this logically, without changing our unique value proposition, or offer at all. We cannot do this predictably. This is important.

The focus should be on keeping the existing working process the same at maintenance, while introducing more focus, and investment on the other subsets of audiences that exist in your business based on your existing client history, to see which becomes our second, third, fourth, fifth place audiences, ad infinitum.

This is VERY important to remember.

This sucks.

For two reasons actually.

Reason one being: You will surely, for a period of time, make less net profit. Somewhere in your business. I don't mean less gross profit, I mean you will make less money in time, net profitability or focus. Do not let this scare you. Everything that will grow requires sacrifice.

Reason two being: Literally every business owner I've worked with finds this to be the most uninteresting part of their business. Emotions must not take the wheel at this juncture, because growth is uncomfortable, change is inevitable, and discomfort and change breeds opportunity. So be unwavering in your pursuit of it, but do not be dumb.

So, without a shadow of a doubt, because you are at stage three, you will inevitably go into stage four.

Stage Four: The cost of change is less expensive than the loss of opportunity.

At this point, I'm straying away from branding because I really do think that addressing all of these problems will give your company the best possible chance to improve your branding. You can choose not to do the following, but without doing them, you may be making a decision based on incomplete information.

When something does not make sense the information given is oftentimes incomplete, poorly communicated, or untrue.

So if you want your brand to make sense, your business should address the obvious first.... I have good news and bad news for you.

Bad news is, throwing stuff at the wall and seeing what sticks is the equivalent of gambling with your livelihood

Good news is, while strategy is theory, it is nothing short of a calculated risk. Let's make it real simple:

Let's talk about the basics of macroeconomics. Example:

You sell hot dogs in a ballpark, and you have 100 hotdogs.

And you have 200 people attending the game.

You have some options to increase your profitability that are the most obvious.

1. Increase client value: Sell the buyers of your hotdogs more stuff
2. Increase your price: Double the price of the hotdogs
3. Decrease your core value: Sell hotdogs at the same price, but cut them in half. 4. Increase conversion: Spend time figuring out how to sell your hotdogs to 100% of the people who attend
4. Increase your audience: The more people who attend the ball game, the more hotdogs you sell.

Option One: Increasing your client value:

Selling people who are buying your product and being the next thing they need is oftentimes a great way to continue scaling.

For example, when you're selling a hotdog, they'll need a drink. Sell them one. This is a need, for something that is real, that is derived from a new problem that is created from the resolution of a problem you just addressed. Someone is hungry, they want a hotdog, which makes them thirsty, sell them a drink.

These are often a necessity, and if you're not selling them a drink, the vendor next door is selling a $16 beer at a 2000% markup. So literally, solve the need you've created. This is fun, but be selective with this pathway, as you must focus on selling something that requires as little sacrifice of focus as possible while serving that need.

A more fun option, which can ensure this is to sell what we call “add ons” or “upsells”. They’re already buying a hotdog, why not some chips? This serves the part of human nature that focuses primarily on instant gratification. When someone is in a transactional mindset, you can sell more, and that is why there is gum and magazines at the register of a grocery store. Not frozen fish sticks.

This can be a readily available resource for companies to increase their bottom line with minimal effort.

Another obvious option for this would be to sell them two. Given that you’re not selling 100% of your hotdogs, you could simply say, “you’re going to be hungry again in two hours, want me to hold another hotdog here for ya since we get really busy and I want to make sure you get one?”.

Simple reminders to your existing audience that you sell stuff, can in turn result in you selling more stuff.

Option number two: Increasing your price.

Increasing price is rarely if ever decreasing value in my opinion. Increasing the price simply means “I have a lot of demand, and not a lot of time, so I’m going to focus on the people who truly see the value of what I’ve got to give, and nobody else”. Not a bad place to be, quite comfortable in fact. This is how high end brands typically work.

But this can be a short term choice with long term consequences, as it may cannibalize your audience, causing it to shrink rapidly, because it is really only possible if the flow of the audience growth can continue to be funded and increased while sacrificing conversion.

For example, if I sell 50 hotdogs at $10, and now I sell 25 hotdogs at $20, I've forfeited half of my audience, while I've arrived at the same result as option #1, and I'm now working less, I must ensure that the stadium continues to provide me with an audience that is economically able to afford a $20 hot dog. If this is a factor I can reliably control, then I should do it, but if the demand for my hotdogs is simply created from the singular audience I have, then it may be a one trick pony.

Oftentimes this is not a one trick pony for brands with an ever increasing audience size, like most of the luxury handbag brands that exist.

If you're unsure if this is the path to take, and are somewhat lazy (in a non judgmental sense), and you are (this is a mega qualifier) completely maxed out on time, you can take this option as it is always okay to lower your prices back down.

Think about the McRib. It's always being brought back, there's no way it would ever be a menu item that sells at a reasonable volume to keep on the menu full time. It's just perceived as scarce, because it's taken off the menu every once in a while.

In fact, lowering the price again creates a good sense of urgency and with positioning can be quite complementary to the audience that you've been working to attract that would be able to afford the higher prices, as shark bait often attracts remoras and crabs.

Option Number Three: Decrease your value; sell hotdogs at the same price, but cut them in half.

This one is a real misnomer.

Business owners also love to provide value, this I know to be true, as no working business that provides little value, will exist forever. Ever.

Any business that exists and that will continue to exist will always provide value. So decreasing the value, is basically saying "fuck you" to your consumers, and will without a shadow of a doubt be the downfall of your business.

We live in a world where brands try to do this sneakily, through tactics labeled as "Shrinkflation".

This should only come out of necessity and your brand better be well established, and well known, and trusted by a large set of consumers.

However, this is a good option when transitioning a brand or introducing new value ads. This requires extensive strategy, and can only work if the value removed is replaced by something of equal or more perceived value.

For a limited time, our half of a hot dog (which should be $5) comes with free chips. The attempt being that chips are perceived as so much more significantly valuable than half of a hotdog to the consumer, and while being 200% more profitable to the company, thus growing the audience.

A good example of this, might be a company that provides live events, that are in person 10 times a year, to doing 5 in person live events, and then 5 virtual events, that increase inclusivity while maintaining the value of in person events because the perceived value of networking in person does not go down, and the percentage of people who can attend an virtual event goes up.

Or a company that normally ships their magazines, offering an option to opt to a digital magazine for a small price reduction, increasing the speed and reliability of deliverables, while significantly reducing the overhead of their fulfillment.

Option Number Four: Increase conversion; spend time figuring out how to sell your hotdogs to 100% of the people who attend

This is where coaches and consultants frenzy with massive promises and limited results. The average of business owners that strive for this goal and fall short of 100%, calculated as a whole and translated to a percent is certainly 100%.

However, there are absolutely things you can do that can increase your conversions that are quite obvious and low maintenance. This is often where discipline comes into play, and company missions must be communicated well.

In fact, sales and marketing coaches have existed since the dawn of successful enterprise because improving the functionality of a machine isn't really that inconspicuous to the outside eye.

In fact, oftentimes, a business owner can identify what should be improved on just by looking at the stats. The answer to increasing conversion is always looking at the sales process, and there is also rarely if ever one singular thing you can do to contribute to the solution of this problem.

For example, every day in the ballpark, 200 people walk past the hotdog stand, but only 150 see it.

You may be thinking it's something like "Let's paint the sign red. Also, let's have someone yell "hotdogs" every time there's not a line." These are advertising examples.

It could be everytime someone gets in line for a hotdog, or begins buying one but does not end up purchasing, you follow up with them.

If the hotdog is $10, and they have $8 cash, offer them another way to pay. If their card declined, help them finance a hotdog. Lol.

This is what I mean, the options are endless and rely solely on you doing everything possible to make sure someone can buy a hotdog, but it's really important not to implement any changes to an "IF" if it never happens or there's no "WHEN".

Meaning, don't offer financing on a hotdog unless you have customers whose cards are not going through. I mean you can, but it should only be a last resort if you properly survey those who did not buy a hotdog and they say "I wanted one, but it was too expensive".

See why coaches and consultants might have a field day in this area?

Let's address increasing your audience: Business owners love to believe in prosperity while thinking scarcely. "Well what if the stadium only fits 200 people". Well then I hope you're making 100 billion fucking dollars, because that's literally how much money you'd be making if you were selling to 100% of the audience that exists for any market.

I'm going to cover option number five in the next chapter, because likely, if you've done all of these other four options, then you are likely at stage 5.

Stage Five & Six: The Paradox

Do you know about the ship of theseus? If all the parts of a ship are gradually replaced over time, is it still the same ship?

Let me say this, this should serve first as a guide for improving profitability, this is like the therapy and life coaching you need before you become who you are, and if you ever feel lost, you should really start from the beginning and do everything I've told you to do in this thesis from the beginning before arriving at this point.

The nature of identity and change is that when you change you gain a new identity but your purpose can stay the same.

The end of beginning: What is branding and how can I increase my audience?

So let's talk about option number five: Increase your audience: The more people who attend the ball game, the more hotdogs you sell.

Well, by choosing this option, you will certainly feel like your profitability is going down.

Especially if you've never had to actually spend money getting clients. We're always exchanging something, so this is an amazing time for you if you've never spent money on client acquisition.

I want you to accept something by reaching this stage.

At this stage, your time, and energy is now significantly more valuable. Which means that you cannot personally go out and spin a sign to get more customers.

You can, but you will lose money being away from the stand selling hotdogs.

After mastering this point, you should realize the true potential of mastering this skill means you will no longer have to trade your time for the same amount of money.

We live in a very fortunate time for you, and I believe this can go one of two ways.

1. Very costly, but fast.
2. Less costly, but slow.

This is a good thing for you. Because you are blessed enough to live in 2024, you have the ability to access billions of dollars worth of engineering and data mining at your disposal.

You know how you think your phone is listening to you? Because you and your soon to be fiance were talking about going wedding ring shopping, and then 10 seconds later you got an ad for a wedding ring?

Creepy right? How did your social media just *know* that you were talking about this? Our phones must be listening to us, right?

Well, I cannot say for sure that this fear is unjustified. Cambridge analytica really showed us how far social media platforms are willing to go to use data to sell us more stuff we don't need.

If you want to achieve this with your audience, then read closely.

If something is free, then then you are the commodity. I hope this doesn't make you want to throw your smartphone in the fireplace and get a flip phone.

The truth is, this has always been our reality. Advertisements in the movie theater, and billboards in your neighborhood. Posters for the garage sale down the street require one thing; your attention. Sure the medium in which we get ads has changed, and the frequency has gone up, but advertising boiled down to its most simplest form is these 5 w's.

1. Who they are shown to
2. When they are shown to them
3. Why they are shown to them
4. What the advertisement says
5. Where it is placed

See? That's not all that scary. I mean, the reality is that social media platforms have thousands of data points on people. So they may know that you are of a marrying age, in a relationship,

live in a neighborhood where the average income can afford a ring of a certain price, and your buddy sent you a video of the 5 best proposals of all time in your DM's.

You're probably not being spied on without permission, the platforms algorithms and AI are so smart, the time you see the ads just feels eerily "perfect".

So if we know this to be true, how can we use it to reach more people who have the problems we help solve?

Here's some core pillars we should use as our compass as we embark on this journey:

1. Feelings do not always equate to good business decisions.
2. Data is the catalyst for good theories.
3. Strategy is not planning.

Simply said, if we can use data to devise a strategy and remove our feelings then our true north will be more money. Theory is simply the paths we choose to take, and our true north should guide us to safety if we are to go the wrong direction.

Sora provided me an excellent visual representation of this:

Here's the *really* cool thing, if you're lacking data like I said you can actually gather it to improve the effectiveness of your compass.

We're all in the same place, just a different boat. We're all returning to this same place at the same time.

So let's revisit these questions:

Product: Who is it for? What is your product? When do people need it? Why do they buy it? How do they know a product like yours exists?

Service: Who is your service for? What problem is it solving? When do people need it? Why do they buy it? How do they know a service like yours exists?

Sales Process: How does someone go from never having heard of you, all the way to becoming the best client who's spent the most money with you? You may be thinking of a real example of this. What is each tiny individual part of the sales process? Think of it, as point A being the starting point, and point B being the finishing point, add as many steps as you think are in between until someone gets from point A to being point B.

Audience: Try not to project your feelings onto this part. Do not use the words typically. Simply list all that you know about every square inch of this. Who is your audience? What "stuff" do they like and consume already? What gender are they? Who is your youngest client, and who is your oldest client? How old are all of your clients? How much money do they make? Where do they live? What do they do for work?

Marketing: What assets do you have? What are marketing assets that are humans? What are marketing assets that are tangible? What are they digitally? Are they email, social media, phone calls, conversations in person, events? What is everything that you define as something that markets you, analog or digital?

Customer Satisfaction: Do not use profits to define this. How happy are your clients? Do they give your products good ratings? Do they recommend them to friends? Do they use some of the products? What parts do they use? What parts do they not use? Do they buy it again? Do they stay clients for long? How long? Do they like your team? Do they like you after buying from you?

Write all of this down into a notebook again, and look at your original version. Do they look different? Does it have simply more information without sacrificing the original information? Or is it a completely different ship now?

The likelihood that the answers are extremely different should be relatively low, unless through doing business you've stumbled upon something truly revolutionary, which if you have, then well done. Zuckerburg is shaking in his boots, and VC firms should be contacted immediately.

For the actual branding element you're going to be able to define some core messaging pillars.

This really is the theoretical sense of how you should proceed, but I guarantee that it will help you gain important insights through data collection.

Just as I wrote in the beginning, our options as I see them, are as follows:

1. You can use the data in the existing marketplace to determine what EXISTING audiences are available to you, which in turn will determine what your unique value proposition is, which will in turn define what your most valuable product or service is, which will in turn influence your business model. The results will influence your general feelings towards your business, not the other way around.
2. You can use the data in the marketplace to CREATE what your audience is, which will in turn determine what your unique value proposition is, which will in turn define what your most valuable product or service is, which will in turn influence your business model. Your feelings towards the market will influence your results.

Well, you can actually go further back, to a buyer that does not even identify themselves as a buyer *yet*, which we will touch upon at the end of the book.

Branding Part I: Analyze what markets you own.

I’m using avatars plural because I believe that as you begin to look at your avatars and the process in which they became your clients you’ll always identify a few or more general avatars.

This is an important thing to factor in, especially if your offer is already unique compared to other offers in the marketspace. Because when you are working with a specific client avatar, you’re likely capturing a segment of the market.

When looking at consumer subsets you can easily rationalize that you are either a large fish in a small pond, or a small fish in a large pond. This isn’t a new concept either, some people like to use blue / red ocean to define this. Your client audience contains multiple subsets, and those subsets are a subset of a whole. Remember my horrible hotdog analogy, let's break it down using this again. We'll call the stadium "The Crimson Falcons stadium".

Consider the blue is your existing market that you regularly can find you serve through your customer reporting. These are people who you already sell two. Now the green is people who make up the available audience as a whole. It's not really breakthrough that you are

undeserving markets that you could otherwise be serving, and it's important to define which ones are worth targeting.

If you look at the raw data as a whole without subjectively theorizing how audiences may be complimentary, you might be looking at this graph and thinking the opportunity lies in the wrong places.

Let's define each subset. Remember, blue is who you already estimate will become clients, while green is the available market. Normally you'd start with generalities to describe these audiences, but going into specifics works just as well if not better so long as theoretical presumptions prove to have some accuracy through data collection or market testing.

Subset A: People who like tradition or experience.

Subset B: People who like convenience and availability

Subset C: People who like flavor and satisfaction

Now since the audience as a whole is made up of 200 people, and you are capturing two existing audiences you are at a crossroads as to what you can do to increase your sales, since you are only capturing 50% of the audience or 100 people so far.

It may seem like an obvious choice to change your branding and marketing strategy to target the large, and seemingly available audience of people who like flavor and satisfaction. But before you start on a journey rebranding the hotdog to be a michelin star experience, consider going a layer deeper. If you are all or nothing with branding you can't have it all so you will end up with nothing if you try to.

If the decision to rebrand would then alienate your existing consumer market, you may be wasting a lot of time and energy trying to serve a market or better yet, create one.

Excluding environmental factors, that may add additional variables and looking at this in it's simplest form you actually could argue that it would be better to capture more of your existing audience as you've already gotten momentum in that area. But what's important is to not just look at the available market as the market that has nothing but the market that is instead being served something else. This is where you can actually go into the distribution of subsets as shown here.

We're now breaking subset down into the two further client archetypes that are available to us, within a specific market of people who like tradition or experience.

So although there are 120 people total in this market, and you're capturing 50, you're actually dominating subset A2, and have potential to gain in subset A1. Through surveying or observation we could define the subset of people who like tradition or experience into two additional subsets.

Now the characteristics of this subset of a subset, could actually be shared amongst other groups that we have otherwise not paid attention to.

Subset A1: The Crimson Falcons Fanatics

Subset A2: Tourists and Casual Attendees

So initially what you could do is look at your marketing and branding strategies to resonate with an uncaptured segment of the audience. This should lead to a resolution on the decision of approaching a brand strategy from the following standpoint:

Subset A1: Tourists and Casual Attendees has the greatest potential of gain (55 people), of a subset A, which is composed of people who like tradition or experience.

Leveraging this could be a very obvious direction to go. But the simplicity of this example grazes past something that is very essential and can also be discovered with complex brands and audiences.

Branding II: Analyze what markets can you share or dominate?

We can look at this from a longevity standpoint, which decisions will give us the best long term success, and we could look at this from a transactional standpoint, which would mean how we can realize this increase as soon as possible.

The truth is that the audiences that are in the marketplace are rarely if ever “not” being served. Sure, they may be underserved by your competitors, but your competitors have advantages that you may never be able to beat. Such as the people who like flavor and satisfaction. You can't dress up a hotdog and say it’s gourmet. I mean you could try, but it would conflict with a lot of other parts of your brand, such as people who like tradition and people who like convenience and availability.

When you're devising a brand strategy before making a decision I really recommend using the SWAT analysis. This is a very, very basic rubric for how you can go about it, but it's also where you can get very creative with your decision making and strategy.

A SWAT analysis, which will show you how your brand (if more complicated than a hotdog stand), should examine the marketplace as a whole to determine what you can gain leverage on that your competitors may not be providing. This is a very large and important part of brand strategy but we're going to continue before we concentrate on more difficult topics

SWAT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Advantages and Threats, and can be looked at after doing an initial analysis of the data you have readily available to you from your own customers.

At this juncture we start looking at competitors, not just at what they are doing right, what we do better, and what neither of us are doing, but also the potential threats to the brand. Threats don't need to be paid attention to too heavily, but you should be simply watching them.

Let's call the competitor "Lobster Rolls" and look at their SWAT:

Strengths: Gourmet, desirable by many

Weaknesses: Expensive, not convenient

Advantages: Uniqueness, possibly aligned with culture depending on location (such as new england)

Threats: New vendors offering similar products like gourmet sandwiches.
We are "Hotdogs":

Strengths: Convenient

Weaknesses: Not gourmet or delicious to everyone

Advantages: Traditional food at a ball game, part of the experience

Threats: New vendors offering similar products like pretzels

See? Threats are sometimes shared among brands, and sometimes a threat can be unpredictable. Unless there is an audience of people who are allergic to hotdogs and lobster rolls, you may just be aware threats exist but are typically going to disrupt the market as a whole.

This is why it's relevant to look at threats, because it's also a way to devise strategies for gathering new advantages in the marketplace. So if we know our advantage is that we are a traditional food, and we want to play into that, we have to return to the audience analysis of

those who attend the Crimson Falcons stadium:

Let's look at subset C2, and through our fake data and conclude that subset C2, is also composed of The Crimson Falcons fanatics.

Now we can strategize how this might affect our gross revenue and what should be invested into our brand strategy. Again this is the very basics, I am neglecting to explain a very large part of the picture intentionally so that I can explain the basics.

Our advantage can be creatively thought of because all we have to do is find an advantage that others are not doing. We could *try* to copy the advantages of the competitors, by making our product more unique. But why reinvent the hotdog?

Based on the determination of the competitors audiences, we can devise that if they are Crimson Falcons fanatics who also value flavor and satisfaction we could come up with a few things:

“The Crimson Falcon Chili Dog” disgustingly comes to mind. I actually love a chili dog, but when combined with chrismson falcon it just sounds gross.

Maybe we’re trying to tackle two things at once, addressing those who like flavor and satisfaction and The Crimson Falcons at the same time. It comes across as inauthentic, and somewhat desperate right? Maybe what we need to do is determine or theorize what values of that audience come first.

If you know sports, you know that sports fans love their teams. I would argue, more than the fact they love unique and tasty food. You could also argue that foodies will always be foodies over

sports. But who is likely showing up to the ball game? This is a buying behavior, and environmental factor that we can use to determine which direction we should go. I know I’m taking the long road to a conclusion you may have already made but finally, let’s look at one final part of determining which branding direction we should go.

Branding III: Define factors that influence the decision making process. Remember when I was talking about the 5 w’s for advertising?

1. Who they are shown to
2. When they are shown to them

3. Why they are shown to them
4. What the advertisement says
5. Where it is placed

Ultimately these questions are going to play a factor in your branding. Because branding is the representation of your advertising and marketing.

Though these two don't have to be related at this point, on a larger scale it would matter, especially if your company goes outside the boundaries of your local 200 person sports stadium.

So at the Crimson Falcon stadium

1. Who: People coming to watch a ball game
2. When: Before, during and after the game
3. Why: Because people who enjoy sports, will also want to eat and drink 4. What: Food
4. Where: The stadium

So let's make a final decision on what to do with the branding and then devise a way to come up with a budget for this decision.

We can determine that it's all around the sport and it's around the team. So let's try to be "The official hotdog of the Crimson Falcons".

I feel like we can confidently decide on doing a pilot test for this!

Long term, people may remember this, so we don't always have to stick with this, as over time, when people think of Crimson Falcons, they will think of hotdogs! (I'm cracking up laughing at this) But in all seriousness, this can actually be an advantage and brand strategy that could go out into other sports stadiums, it could be a national campaign, for each individual sports team. In its simplicity, it took a decent amount of research to conclude, so the potential is there.

What we now realize is that our competitive advantage can serve subset A1, and Subset C2 for a total uncaptured audience potential of 85. Which, if we captured just 30% of, would mean that we gain a total of 25.5 new clients, and grow our gross revenue by 25%, because we will have gone from 100, to 125 customers.

So let's say our hotdogs are $10 each, and we now have a potential gain of up to 25 new customers or $250. So let's start spending some money on branding right???

NO!

First, you need to find a way to benefit both your brand and the message you are trying to convey with that brand. Let's actually use some tools to strategize how to do this.

Brand IV: Audience emotions and Values

So we are now at the crux of the many elements of a brand. It's not always this easy, but I'm throwing us a softball for the sake of learning and terrible metaphors. Emotions and values absolutely cannot and should not ethically be made up. They absolutely can benefit a brand, make a consumer feel good and be a symbiotic decision you decide to make in your company. But even the slightest vibe of inauthenticity will negatively impact the brand and consumer relationship.

So when developing a brand, having a mission is really important. That mission can typically be conveyed through storytelling which is what we will get into later when we talk about communicating the brand messaging in a way that is appealing and not manipulative to the audience you have.

You should absolutely observe the existing emotions of the audience or emerging audience who are readily in a marketplace. You have two options here, you can either look at the existing audience, meaning the people who on a regular basis actually exist in the audience (I know this is redundant), or the people who are entering the market. What would be really great, is if you can identify shared values between both. The only time you may stray away from this, is if the emerging market is poised to completely consume the new market as a whole. Meaning, if apple tried to make their phones appeal to elderly people who are not good with technology and young people are going to use all their features at the same time, it wouldn't likely be a good strategy.

The unique value proposition for both those audiences are completely different, so it's important to list the two market values as well in order to help make a good conclusion. If you get this right, you're creating a formula to increase brand loyalty, even before someone becomes a consumer. Identifying values that are complementary to the multiple facets of a brand is an extremely powerful tool.

At this point we can use consumer demographics, and in my opinion, basic logic about what our consumers values are. But what I do know, is that if you pick a value, it should be one that people strive to have more of. Values are intangible, and if you're thinking about a simple hotdog, you're maybe confused as to how we can possibly associate a value with it.

This is where we should actually list the values that people desire. I actually like to brainstorm this, and if a company culture lacks this, you may realize it at this point. The values should align with the owner, and they should be good, desirable values. I think this is why so many brands decide on "inclusion" as being a part of their brand messaging. Because the more diverse we are becoming the more emerging markets value inclusion.

Teamwork, community, family, friendship, kindness, empathy, unity, service, support, Inclusion are all good basis values for us to make a decision on where the brand should go and how we should devise a strategy to convey this while simultaneously benefiting the brand.

So let's now look at the assets we have while deciding a direction for us to go. Here's who we're trying to attract:

1. Subset A1: The Crimson Falcons Fanatics, people who like tradition or experience. 2. Subset C2: The Crimson Falcons Fanatics, people who normally like flavor and satisfaction
2. New Market Potential: 25 customers, $250 in gross profit potential
3. Value determination: People want to foster inclusion, community, family, friendship, kindness, empathy, unity, service, and support
4. W's: They enjoy sports, before, during and after they go to a stadium

Great! We have a budget and a direction, so now let's theorize what our branding campaign could be.

Here's what I came up with:

We could go for a licensing deal with the stadium to be the "official hotdog of the Crimson Falcons". This would not encroach on other vendors as it doesn't impact their unique value proposition and isn't a threat they are aware of. We could donate 10% of our gross profit to the stadium, even if it means all our hotdogs, would equate to $125 out of our pockets, with no advertising expense. Which means we would net $125 and capture more of the market. It would create brand loyalty, as people who love the Crimson Falcons would love to support them, which feeds their desires to foster inclusion, community, family, unity, service ect. It would be authentic in its nature, as it is a whole company proposition, and over time, it would only benefit us more, if it benefits the stadium more. Lastly, the association with our hotdog and the ballgame becomes a dual purpose brand campaign. The stadium may want to actually feature our hotdogs to their audience to diversify the ads they are shown at the game.

Because those principles we are demonstrating with a hotdog can be conveyed not just for us, but for the team and the stadium.

Remember how I mentioned that we are initially going to take a hit? We're gambling 10% of our gross profit for this case study. Let's talk about communicating this way with a branding campaign.

Branding V: Crafting a Brand Story:

This is the most fun part of branding, because you have all the elements of creating an amazing story. Nancy Duarte talks about this a lot in her book "Resonate"

What we want is to gather a brand story that is authentic, serves the values of the brand to the desired target audience, while simultaneously being interesting and inclusive.

The power of storytelling essentially captures the attention of the desired audience, allows the audience to experience the result before it happens and so much more. It's multidimensional and multipurpose.

So let's talk about the hero's journey and why it's the easiest format to use for larger companies.

I will argue that different sized companies should not just use the hero's journey, but let's get into it, I'm going to use a SHORT version of the hero's journey for readers sake.

It begins with the call to adventure, the hero is invited or compelled to embark on a journey. The hero then "crosses the threshold", leaves their familiar world to enter a new challenging environment. They experience "trials and challenges" and an "ordeal". Then there is a "reward". Lastly there is a return, where they bring a value they can share.

So we can make this all about a hotdog at a ballpark.

1. Call to adventure:

"Do you want to support the Crimson Falcons this season?"

1. Crossing the threshold:

"Step up to the plate and make your purchase count!"

1. Trials and Challenges:

"Every hotdog helps! Can we hit our goal?"

1. Ordeal

"Your team needs you now more than ever!"

1. Reward

"Enjoy a delicious 100% beef hotdog while supporting your teams journey to victory!" 6. Return

"Thanks for supporting your team! The Crimson Falcons are stronger than ever!"

The general messaging is down. Simple formula right? Now this is a combination of direct response marketing and branding. It's not all that clever either. What you can do to incorporate the branding with the message and the objective would be to season in true, authentic stories. This may come at a later part. Let's say the ballpark supports a cause as well, later on, you could incorporate real stories of how the hotdog campaign has helped the team. Making the investment in the brand initiative goes a long way.

Branding VI. Distribution Channels and Campaigns.

Now we just need to decide on which marketing channels and campaigns we want to syndicate our messaging on.

I'm going to talk only from an organic standpoint since the paid acquisition standpoint of the branding really does make this paid.

This is a hybrid campaign, since there is an associated cost, but there's no hard costs or budgets specifically for the type of licensing agreement we're working on.

Our "Get a hotdog at the Crimson Falcons Stadium" campaign can serve both us and the Crimson falcons so this is a joint venture between the two companies. It may actually serve as a business acquisition for the Crimson Falcons to own the hotdogs if it proves profitable enough. Finally what it could *potentially* do, is promote the stadium if the stadium lacks brand messaging itself. "National Hotdog day" is a holiday on July 17th, and there's merit in running holiday based advertising and marketing.

So let's talk about the common mediums and how we decide on them. Through consumer analysis we could actually understand which mediums people use pretty easily and effectively. A lot of this since it is theory can be common sense!

This is where when we try things we're going to have to observe their outputs if we don't have any prior data to go off of. You should determine the "where" here and list as many possible options to come up with organic strategies that would be applicable.

I'm going to select two:

Objective 1: Stadium Announcements: This would naturally be a byproduct of the symbiotic relationship between the brands.

Objective 2: Social Media Posts: This would be an easy organic approach, especially if you incorporated a hashtag, location or used the organic elements.

We can make these also commingle between each other in a way that is mutually beneficial for us, the stadium and the consumer. After all, you run the marathon for the medal right? The values you get are just a byproduct, but you can't post a picture of your determination without a medal to symbolize it. The hotdog in this example is a demonstration of the values the consumer decided to practice.

The stadium can heavily influence this, and we can determine some baseline metrics. For every announcement that the stadium makes for the 10% proceeds campaign for the Crimson Falcons official hotdog, they could encourage their audience to post a picture with the hotdog on social media.

Using the hashtag, which I will make up entirely #crimsondogz, they could have their picture posted on the billboard.

Now the consumer is motivated to share their experience because they are supporting their team, may get featured on the board, and the stadium and hotdog stand gets free promotion from the consumer for posting on social media. This is a lot of benefits we're talking about from simple strategy.

I wish I could personally explain a method to come to the conclusion I just shared, but I'm going to be honest, at this point I've got no true methodology. I find that this conclusion is common sense and typically easy to come to because good campaigns are a byproduct of thoughtful branding.

Had we skipped any steps of our strategizing, we could have come up with similar but less useful outcomes. So that is why I want to focus on the process and theory that drives the planning.

Again strategy is not theory.

Branding VI. Observation and Knowledge

I'm exhausted! It takes a lot of work to sell 25 hotdogs! Imagine if I cared about your brand like I do these hotdogs.

At this point we would just have to observe the results after time of what came in and make decisions from there. I'm contemplating not addressing this as I don't want to write anymore. But I'm going to do a summary and may or may not come back later and edit it. I'll probably get a brilliant idea of how to explain it in the shower.

But this is going to be where we get data that drives more theory and more decision making. We may have a total failure here, or a home run. (Please god, make the metaphors stop).

But observation is going to determine how this plays out, I would say that we'd want to reach at least 12 more hotdog sales to achieve our goal.

I know I mentioned our goal is 25 but here's what I think, if you can get a brand solidified, into more people's mind, at breakeven or profit, you've accomplished something great.

Since businesses in my mind, reduced down to a two step formula (1) build an audience (2) sell to that audience, you've built your audience and can season it with more branding and decide from here.

Deep Diving:

I'm going to use a REAL example of how this works which you can use as a blueprint for your company.

If you are a company who sells something you have an audience, and that audience will buy it so long as they know you can help them. Simple right?

Two steps, from someone not buying, to becoming a customer. So why do brands struggle with making sure this happens on a consistent basis?

Big brands with massive budgets know the secret to do this endlessly without ever running out of customers to serve.

“How is this possible?” you might be asking yourself

How it’s impossible to prove this does not work, is that you cannot name a single brand that has served 100 percent of customers then disappeared.

The market of customers who need what you have will grow for forever, so long as your service or product is good. Not the best, literally just GOOD.

Products that are terrible have been around for a long time, but they always seem to have customers. The only way a product will no longer be serving an audience is if their audience has 100% evolved past the desire of their product, like how there are less and less buyers of disposable cameras.

But even their audience did not go away, it evolved.

The truth of this evolution is that your product, though potentially obsolete, may just simply appeal to an audience you may not even know exists. You could sell more disposable cameras if you created a market for them, without changing the product at all.

Don’t believe me? In 2023, people spent approximately $920.6 million on disposable cameras globally.

In 2008, the global disposable camera market was estimated to be worth approximately $635 million.

In 1995, the disposable camera market was quite robust. Consumers globally spent around $1 billion on disposable cameras. This period marked the height of disposable cameras' popularity, driven by their convenience, affordability, and widespread availability.

How is this possible? Obviously including inflation, you may be asking yourself, are people really still buying disposable cameras?

YES, and it’s not just because their consumers are loyal to disposable cameras, it's because disposable cameras have audiences that emerged, were created while other existing audiences changed and switched to digital cameras.

Your company can do the same thing, and if your competitors are evolving you can have competitive advantages serving emerging audiences, or creating new ones without changing your core product.

A market is not a new person, it is not created simply by birth of a market, it is fostered by brands who pay attention to the evolution of the needs and desires of individuals.

While everyone wanted a disposable camera as cameras became a necessity, shifting the focus to markets that:

- Travel frequently

- Want to use disposable cameras for weddings

- Want the nostalgic and aesthetic appeal of using them

- Want to photograph underwater

All apply, even though people have cameras quite literally built into almost every phone in the marketplace. In the United States, 97% of adults own a cell phone, with 91% owning a smartphone, which inherently includes a camera.

How amazing is this? You do not need a product that serves everyone, your market will grow and evolve as all markets do, if you do the work to identify them!

This may not be a part of your core belief. Business owners are always fighting for attention, improving their operations and adapting their marketing strategies to simply reach more people. Belief that more is more is ever increasing causing a massive distraction for business owners who can find real benefit from revising and refining their audience habitually.

Even business owners who do revisit their audiences end up believing that they are so different and so changed they can no longer serve them without serving up the next thing.

In the fitness industry you will see this, how many people who are selling weight loss products actually sell solutions to the new problems they create, like athletic improvement once the weight is lost, or mindset for those who are struggling.

You may actually be treating your clients with the same level of disrespect unintentionally while you are trying to follow the money.

Big brands know this, and as your business grows and evolves away from those who you help, you lose out on a consumer base that still needs you, and those consumers buy the other or next thing from someone else!

This problem predominantly is encountered by existing brands. New brands use this to their advantage to encroach on markets that are underserved, which creates explosive growth and competition.

Refinement and Research:

Research is the key here, and will lead to massive opportunity if observed through the right lens.

Now research and observation can be a boring and sometimes confusing process, which can lead to a lot of hypotheses and theories.

We're going to go through the next exercise listing a TON of questions, I'm going to describe them in depth and I'm going to use a real example to help you use this yourself. When you are overwhelmed, you may want to stop and revisit this to digest the questions I'm asking you and the answers they may provide.

STRATEGY ONE: DEFINE WHAT HAPPENS NOW

This question can help us isolate some things that are working but also things we could do, do not examine this question as a "checklist of things to do". It is not meant to be that, it's simple purpose is to remind you of something you should be looking at regularly, which is the beginning of your relationship with them.

We're going to deep dive into this as it's the most important part of your business when it comes to opportunity, as it may grow your business by being adapted after being refined.

First, ask yourself "Why does someone want what I have to sell?"

Answer this based on your current understand of the market, you don't have to do research at this stage because what you know to be the answer of this question with the information you have CURRENTLY, helps you identify your brand messaging.

"Example: People want what I have to sell because it helps them get from point a to point b."

Let's identify every possible way that someone discovers your business. If you have the research done, identify and mark what percent of your customers discovered you through this channel. This is NEVER exact or perfect, this can absolutely be based on whatever data you have, but must be free from what you "believe" should be the way they find you. If the asset is not listed, list it yourself, if it is listed but you don't have it, mark with X.

1. Example: Podcasts, we feature our stuff on podcasts a lot
2. Paid ads
3. Books
4. Organic Content
5. Early stage / introductory / sample products
6. Influencer marketing
7. Live Events
8. Networking

For all the assets listed above, try to clarify what you say within the assets. The actual content of the assets, if you are a financial manager, and use a book, write down what you could do in the book.

1. Example: Postcasts, In those podcasts we talk about the best stocks to invest in if you want cash dividends to grow your portfolio.

The next part is going to cover how they use you in their first discovery. The reason why this is important is this can be tied to who your audience truly is. The answers can be short or long. Typically if the product is a physical product, these do not require complex answers. For services, this can require a complex answer. Eliminate how you *feel* customers and audiences *should* react and try to base this off your own personal experience and understanding of your

customers. One word answers are welcome, short answers are preferred if possible as to not overwhelm or jade you from the conclusions you should be making.

1. Example: What parts do they use? When they listen to the podcast, they become a client and through our services get to try our stocks we recommend they buy to see a positive result!
2. What parts didn't they use?
3. Why didn't they use it?
4. Why did they use it?
5. Good Short term physical results
6. Good Long term physical results
7. Good Short term emotional results
8. Good Long term emotional results
9. Bad Short term physical results
10. Bad Long term physical results

11. Bad Short term emotional results
12. Bad Long term emotional results
13. They are offered something else?
14. They are offered nothing else?
15. Do they need something else?
16. Do they need you any longer?
17. Are they the same after using the product?
18. Does their problem persist?
19. What new challenges arrive?
20. How do they feel about the new challenges?
21. What do they do to handle them if they handle them at all?
22. If they don't get results what do they do? Do they ask for help?

What do they want next? This question does not just need to be answered for your quest to secure new clients, it's also a benefit to observe this to increase your lifetime client value.

1. Do they buy it again
2. Do they buy something else
3. Is there a next level?
4. Are they even your customer anymore? Have you created a new customer? 5. What do they want now?

Now let's use this with a real example to help you as you fill out the information below, I will repeat explanations for the sake of conceptual understanding.

In this example I'm going to use a professional service, which is a yacht brokerage that I've worked with. This brokerage has been around for 40 years. The market is very very small, and the audience is actually growing at a pretty good pace. There's plenty of new competition and

there is a growing audience, and evolving existing audience, as "boating enthusiasts" are not just lifestyle oriented, they also view themselves as hobbyists. The (X) I mark means this does not exist.

First, ask yourself "Why does someone want what I have to sell?"

Answer this based on your current understand of the market, you don't have to do research at this stage because what you know to be the answer of this question with the information you have CURRENTLY, helps you identify your brand messaging.

"People want to buy a yacht because there is a big "cool" factor, they typically want to use it to show off, but also it's a lifestyle, they are into boating as a whole. They've maybe owned other boats, like sailboats and want to upgrade. They also could be new money and use it as a status symbol. It's just a fun and cool thing to own"

How they discover you.

1. Podcasts (X=None)
2. Paid ads (x)
3. Books (x)
4. Organic Content: Yes, on social media.
5. Early stage / introductory / sample products (x)

6. Influencer marketing: Some, in a small sense
7. Live Events: Yes, through boat shows.
8. Networking: Yes through existing customers and through facebook groups.

For all the assets listed above that you have, try to clarify what you say within the assets. The actual content of the assets, if you are a financial manager, and use a book, write down what you could do in the book.

1. Organic content: Typically we'll be featuring new and creative boats that are currently listed for sale or possible to reserve to buy once released, it's very engaging and gets their attention.
2. Influencer marketing: This also typically will feature awesome new boats, or what people are currently buying in the marketplace and a diverse range of reasons why they are buying them
3. Live Events: This is great because they are there in person which helps us build relationships with them and have a real dialogue with them as to why they want to purchase a boat
4. Networking: When we have a client who's had a good experience with us they will typically recommend us to their friends and colleagues in this small community because we provide such great service.

The next part is going to cover how they use you in their first discovery. The reason why this is important is this can be tied to who your audience truly is. The answers can be short or long. Typically if the product is a physical product, these do not require complex answers. For services, this can require a complex answer. Eliminate how you *feel* customers and audiences *should* react and try to base this off your own personal experience and understanding of your customers. One word answers are welcome, short answers are preferred if possible as to not overwhelm or jade you from the conclusions you should be making. Notice how my clients answers change based on their perspective of the question, this is not a bad thing:

1. What parts do they use?: They typically will use their boats part time of the year, during holiday, very rarely if ever do they live on the boat.
2. What parts didn't they use?: There's lot of times they don't use the boat, and they typically are not using all of the features of the boat. They will use it for specific purposes, such as going on holiday, and entertaining friends or family.
3. Why didn't they use it?: They just don't have time to use it at all.
4. Why did they use it?: There was a layer of trust built between us and them 5. Good Short term physical results: They have a boat I guess, that they want and love. 6. Good Long term physical results: Over the time they own the boat, they could have a

deeper connection with it, more aware of how much it improves their life. Sometimes it even increases in value which helps offset maintenance costs over the years if they ever intend to resell it.

1. Good Short term emotional results: They are so excited to own this amazing piece of property.
2. Good Long term emotional results: They are further satisfied with this purchase even when new boats come to market, and love to express how long they have been a part of the yachting community.
3. Bad Short term physical results: They are scared sh!tless that they have

this massive responsibility

4. Bad Long term physical results: Boats are expensive, they are not easy to maintain. The costs range from maintenance, to docking to chartering it to the locations they want it to be in!
5. Bad Short term emotional results: Overwhelm, fear, and sometimes even buyers remorse.
6. Bad Long term emotional results: More overwhelm, more fear, and long term buyers remorse.
7. They are offered something else?: Sometimes they want to sell the boat, for good or bad reasons, which we do. Sometimes they want another boat or a different boat, which we help them find and purchase.
8. They are offered nothing else?: Yes, often. This can sometimes be a once a lifetime purchase for people.
9. Do they need something else?: I'm not sure, sometimes they want help with maintenance, docks, boat trades, charters ect.
10. Do they need you any longer?: They will always need a broker if they are selling or buying. Most of them at least.
11. Are they the same after using the product?: No because a lot of times they were not a boat owner and now they own a boat.
12. Does their problem persist? It can depend, sometimes they want another and sometimes they do not.
13. What new challenges arrive? Mainly just financial related problems caused by maintenance.
14. How do they feel about the new challenges? Only the super wealthy do not care about this. Everyone else is typically in a rush to solve it.

15. What do they do to handle them if they handle them at all? They typically will either employ another broker or they will get someone to handle the asset for them. 22. If they don’t get results what do they do? Do they ask for help? They will get the result if they are qualified.

See how we’re beginning to define an audience that exists and all of it’s complexities. This is sometimes where business owners feel that if they identify new services and products they’re able to consume the subsets of the market they serve, which can oftentimes create a division of focus.

I would recommend staying away from this idea for now until you identify your brand positioning first, as oftentimes you have a large audience you can create from these conclusions. We’re not done yet, we need a full understanding of your audience.

What do they want next? This question does not just need to be answered for your quest to secure new clients, it’s also a benefit to observe this to increase your lifetime client value.

1. Do they buy it again: Sometimes they will, especially if they want to upgrade. They will use us or a competitor to sell their boat, and buy a new one oftentimes.
2. Do they buy something else: Rarely but sometimes, typically they’re buying services for maintenance, docking, chartering ect.
3. Is there a next level? Oh yes, leveling up or down, either way benefits us. 9. Are they even your customer anymore? Have you created a new customer? I don’t think they stop being our customer unless they no longer own a boat and do not want to buy another.
4. What do they want now? Sometimes nothing.

Wow! Now what can we do with all of this information?

Let's write out what happens by going through our list and create some narrative that is easy to read, this is your current brand messaging.

Starting from the top and working our way down we can conclude some of the following:

"My company sells boats using a variety of engaging strategies. We start with organic content, where we feature new and creative boats that are listed for sale or can be reserved. This type of

content is very engaging and grabs the attention of potential buyers who are excited to see the latest and greatest in boating. We also leverage influencer marketing. Influencers showcase these awesome new boats and talk about the different reasons people are buying them. It's a great way to reach a diverse audience and highlight why our boats are so popular in the marketplace. One of our favorite methods is live events.

These events allow us to meet customers in person, build relationships, and have real conversations about their boating needs. It's a personal touch that helps us understand exactly why they want to purchase a boat and makes the experience memorable for them. Networking plays a big role too. When a client has a great experience with us, they often recommend us to their friends and colleagues within the boating community.

This word-of-mouth marketing is invaluable because it comes from a place of trust and satisfaction. When customers first discover us, it's often through these engaging channels. They typically use their boats part-time, mostly during holidays and for entertaining friends and family. They might not use all the features of the boat regularly, simply because they don't have the time. But when they do use the boat, it's all about the trust we've built with them. They love owning the boat and are excited about the short-term enjoyment it brings. Over time, they might develop a deeper connection with it, appreciating how it enhances their lifestyle. Sometimes, they even find the boat increases in value, which helps offset maintenance costs if they ever decide to resell. Of course, there are challenges. In the short term, owning a boat can be overwhelming and bring a sense of responsibility. Long-term, the financial aspects of maintenance and docking can be burdensome.

But for those who truly love boating, the positives often outweigh these concerns. Occasionally, customers decide to sell their boat, and we're there to help with that too. Sometimes they want to upgrade or find a different boat, and we assist them in that process. Even if they don't need

anything immediately, our relationship with them doesn't end. They often come back to us for various services like maintenance, docking, or charters."

We can significantly improve branding of how you help without introducing new services or products by simply examining what the marketplace consists of, and what competitors are doing.

So how do we use this to our benefit? We actually deep dive into who the consumer is. Adding to this will help us understand how we can best resonate with the consumer.

Deep Dive into Audiences.

I know I breezed past how we can deep dive into audiences in our last example but let's take it a step further without ANY analytics at all. Then we will go into competitor analysis. This is okay to do in such a small market but we may not have any data to go off of, just personal experience. I also think that it can be concluded that data, while valuable, may not always be as objective as we think it is when we're coming up with something new.

First, we must compare the challenges we create ourselves in the marketplace with this limited brand message.

We can easily do this through the SWAT analysis, which potentially brushes against what our competitors are doing in the marketplace that creates competition in the marketplace.

Strengths: You actively are aware of inventory and "private" listings, or even people who are thinking about selling a yacht, and understand the complexity of ownership of the boat. You have lots of experience in this field and can provide a lot of knowledge and insight. Weaknesses: If your client doesn't already know that you can predict how you can help them they may be just comparing their options in brokers to the boats that are being listed. Advantages: Experience, knowledge, inventory, and authority.

Threats: People can actually buy a boat without a broker now, through websites.

Now let's quickly compare this against a competitor that exists, for the sake of anonymity we'll call the competitor "yachts4all.org"

Strengths: Instant access to tons of boat listings

Weaknesses: Not always giving access to potential listings such as private sales, information could be incorrect, overwhelms the client or creates unrealistic expectations. Can be information overload.

Advantages: Exposes the user to a ton of variety and information.

Threats: People may need a human touch to go through this process or someone to advise them on the elements of their purchase.

So after viewing this, you may conclude that your market is unique to you and you have a unique value proposition. So let's talk about exponentially growing the market you serve. Because you and the online competitors do help the same audience but you both serve different segments of the audience.

We could simply "copy" what the competitors are doing, by increasing the number of boats on our site, but that is what I would believe to be a rather difficult and lazy way to innovate this. A true innovation in the industry would be combining the two, which may exist, but we don't have

to compare ourselves to the revolutionaries who's vision, manpower and capital far exceeds ours.

However at this stage, a lot of times entrepreneurs identify a gap in the marketplace as something that can be created with a new service or product, or combination of both, you can wait on this to create a strategy to capture more of the audience that you have.

We can simply find audiences and craft our brand messaging to appeal to smaller subsets of the market to take more control. We'll do this by combining the first part of our audience defining

process STRATEGY ONE: DEFINE WHAT HAPPENS NOW. With this second strategy, strategy two:

STRATEGY TWO: Existing and complimentary attributes

Doing this is going to take us into the deep end of defining who our audience is based on actual data factors.

Let’s observe first the requirements they must fulfill in order to be a good client for you:

1. Money: They need to have X amount of money.
2. Time: They must have X amount of time to dedicate to this. This can be time they personally spend, or time they delegate to someone on their team / in their circle to spend on this? What other things are they spending their time on?
3. Attention/Focus: How much attention are they spending on this, where is that attention going?
4. Values: What are their core values as people?
5. Delegation (If applicable): Who is this being delegated to?

These next two questions can help you explode the size of your audience:

1. What did they have to do to get to this point?
2. What are they buying before they need / want what you have?

So based on this information we can create a fuller understanding of who they are before looking at data to divide how they are dispersed amongst competitors.

Let's go back to the original example I provided of a Yacht broker, and their answers.

1. Money: If they are shopping around they should be able to afford to finance or purchase with cash at least $250k, but the average sale is typically in the $1-20m range. 2. Time: Boating is used by people for typically 2-3 months out of the calendar year. They need to have time to take to use this, so there must be an element of freedom they can have.
2. Attention/Focus: They’re usually doing this when they are looking for a way to impress, or get quality time, or let loose. So I would say for holiday. Their focus isn’t always work. 4. Values: What are their core values as people? Hard work, quality time, having a hobby, possibly a bit of grandeur. Status.
3. Delegation (If applicable): Who is this being delegated to? The maintenance is almost always asset management while the decision making is done by the owner and their financial consultants, attorneys ect.

We’ll now dive into the next two questions can help them explode the size of their audience:

1. What did they have to do to get to this point?: They have to earn or have a lot of money, or potentially inherit a boat or money. They may have a business or financial investment that is paying off handsomely, they may already have a boat that they want to sell.
2. What are they buying before they need / want what you have? They’re usually spending money in this industry, as most people will pay to charter, or they will have other boats before they decide to get into this.

Next comes some refinement of our brand messaging to help engage these audiences through our strategies we listed before in “how they discover you”:

How they discover you, opportunities:

1. Podcasts (Does your audience exist here?)
2. Paid ads (Does your audience exist here?)
3. Books (Does your audience exist here?)
4. Organic Content: Yes, on social media.
5. Early stage / introductory / sample products: (Does your audience exist here?) 6. Influencer marketing: Some, in a small sense
6. Live Events: Yes, through boat shows.
7. Networking: Yes through existing customers and through facebook groups.

For all the assets listed above that you have, try to clarify what you say within the assets. The actual content of the assets, if you are a financial manager, and use a book, write down what you could do in the book.

1. Organic content: Typically we'll be featuring new and creative boats that are currently listed for sale or possible to reserve to buy once released, it's very engaging and gets their attention. After analysis we will speak more to this audience, we will not only highlight amazing boats, we will highlight amazing places to BE with the boats, why you should take a boat there and why some boats are better for certain vacation spots than others.
2. Influencer marketing: This also typically will feature awesome new boats, or what people are currently buying in the marketplace and a diverse range of reasons why they are buying them. We engage other influencers such as people who give financial advice, talking about the ways they can actually purchase a boat, or get the most value for selling

their boat. We will advise ways they can reduce maintenance costs of boats including how to get charters covered, renting out their boat, and docking their boat in locations with reduced docking fees.

3. Live Events: This is great because they are there in person which helps us build relationships with them and have a real dialogue with them as to why they want to purchase a boat. We will expand our live events to more places we are aware people are currently renting to charter a boat, who may not be aware it is possible to own one which would increase their vacation time spent on a boat.

4. Networking: When we have a client who's had a good experience with us they will typically recommend us to their friends and colleagues in this small community because we provide such great service. We will engage in other networking opportunities and groups that cover the financial aspects of owning a boat.

You can test this in your existing marketing channels you have to see the positive impact and if it's conclusive enough to keep in your strategy.

You can also use this to test marketing channels that may not have existed before.

It will help you to decide whether or not you want to test new marketing and advertising channels. This is the combination of theory, research, testing, and data to come to a precise conclusion.

Applying Market Trend Data:

Finally we can now do some competitor analysis but first we'll want to look at existing data in the marketplace.

A simple way to do this, would be to rely on third party data resources that may help us leverage insights into where the market is now and where it would go to.

The global yacht market is expected to grow significantly in 2024. The market size is projected to increase from $11.92 billion in 2023 to approximately $12.63 billion in 2024, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 6.58% during the forecast period from 2024 to 2030 (Research and Markets) (Maximize Market Research).

This growth is driven by rising disposable incomes, increased spending on luxury and recreational activities, and technological advancements in yacht design and propulsion systems (Global Market Insights Inc.) (Research and Markets).

The market is anticipated to continue expanding due to the growing number of high-net-worth individuals, particularly in emerging markets like Asia Pacific, and increased consumer interest in customized and eco-friendly yachts (Global Market Insights Inc.) (Yacht Sourcing). This trend indicates a robust demand for luxury yachts and related services in the coming years.

This changes a bit of our messaging right? We now have identified an emerging market that we can also resonate with. Surely, an eco-friendly yachting market only makes up a small subset of the market as a whole, but could be used as an additional value proposition for our marketing efforts.

Surely not everyone can afford an eco friendly yacht, but may be open to exploring more eco friendly solutions which would influence their buying decisions. It’s also key to note that an

eco-friendly product resonates with a value of the consumers that we have yet to speak to directly.

The nice part about this is even before we arrived at the stage where we looked at market trend data, we were able to relatively predict that when people spend money on spending in on luxury recreational activities, we are able to identify where we should be targeting our messaging a bit more.

So we're now understanding the full picture.

1. What someone is doing before they buy a yacht
2. What someone is thinking about when they are considering buying a yacht 3. How someone is buying a yacht

Which can give us deep insight into our messaging, and our branding strategy as a whole. Some companies decide to do this as a division of their company so as to not dilute their existing brand messages, while others simply add this onto their existing brand messaging. I think you can diversify your messaging through a series of targeting that you would either manufacture or follow.

Omnipresence, Indoctrination, and Syndication :

When it comes to paid advertising it oftentimes can feel like a buffet of things we can do to reach our audiences, but rarely know where our true buyers come from.

Trust me, even with surveying our audience sometimes they are not even aware of or recall when the initial point of contact with our brand was. Which is why oftentimes brands diversify their spending, and then either use a "trim down" approach, such as spending less in certain advertising channels, or "ramp up" in other areas to see how it directly affects lead flow.

But what I can say is that crafting your message before increasing your frequency can significantly impact the results of this.

Take for example our existing marketing channels, we could diversify the type of content we show in our existing channels or we could add channels here. As a reminder:

1. Organic content: Typically we'll be featuring new and creative boats that are currently listed for sale or possible to reserve to buy once released, it's very engaging and gets their attention. After analysis we will speak more to this audience, we will not only highlight amazing boats, we will highlight amazing places to BE with the boats, why you should take a boat there and why some boats are better for certain vacation spots than others.

Organic content may consist of multiple subsets now, which a budget can be divided or just compounded into. For example:

1a): Channel focusing on charters and vessels

1b): Channel focusing on luxury vacations

1c): Channel focusing on eco-friendly luxury items

1d): Channel focusing on financial investing

1e): Channel focusing on business sales, acquisition

This process can be repeated amongst all the other marketing and advertising channels you use to identify which channels produce the most positive results, although it's fair to argue that your audience may be on more than just one of these channels. Creating omnipresence.

The argument here is that if you do focus on Channel 1a), which focuses on charters and vessels, that because of the "broadness" of the channel, you may want to try multiple messaging angles within that singular channel, as the audience is more obvious, and like I mentioned, broad.

However, if you segment down, you could actually create your audience through our datascope process, which is a form of indoctrination, and predictive buyer behavior.

Focusing on the purchasing decisions of others who may be of your audience that you would then group into your own personalized audience.

For example, a very expensive hotel near me would be the “Rancho Valencia Inn and Spa” where the average cost per night would be $1000. It could imply that your potential audience would be there.

Another example would be luxury home rentals, and sites. If targetable, you could target people who are spending a significantly larger amount of money per night on their vacation.

By going a step further, we discovered that the most expensive place to rent a home per night in the world is Casa Tau in Punta Mita, Mexico, which costs approximately £27,599 (around $35,000) per night. This luxurious property offers unparalleled amenities and services, making it the top choice for high-end travelers looking for an exclusive experience (A Luxury Travel Blog).

Other highly expensive rentals include the Hilltop Villa at Laucala Island Resort in Fiji, priced at $44,000 per night, and Necker Island in the British Virgin Islands, available for $80,000 per night for up to 34 guests (Travel + Leisure).

Which would allow us to set up a 5 foot geofence around this area, capturing people who may be traveling. This is however if they are not using a VPN while on the property which most (but not all) high net worth individuals would think of using.

We could expand or contract this strategy to our liking to produce what we would call seeding content. Or, we could take a shortcut and use direct response marketing to target these audiences.

We could take the engaged audience and show them more and more content about yachting with a call to action, this is where you'd want to make sure the call to action is very direct response.

Such as, exploring purchasing a yacht, talking to someone by clicking here.

Now we could track engagement, such as video views, clicks and more to see if people are actually reading through this content to decide whether or not they are part of the composition of our existing target audience.

A lot of times, advertisers do want to make this information as accurate as possible so their advertisers (us) would invest our money and time into their platforms. This does give us a competitive advantage to nurture an audience we have without spending a fortune on advertising.

We could apply this principle to almost any paid advertising channel now that we know exactly what to say, and analytics over time will give us insight into what is effective by testing these using a variety of strategies that would help us identify origins of our prospective customers.

Geofencing has its own merit, and I don't knock it, however, I do think for emerging markets there could be a step in between that may help you reach that market as well, as well as strategic partnerships with brands that serve our markets.

Such as developing a strategic brand partnership with luxury villas of a certain caliber, or even targeting search engine data for people who are searching for these resorts.

CONCLUSION

So here we are. If you started this book somewhere on that little graph from the beginning, hopefully you now have a better idea of where you actually sit on it, and more importantly, why.

Everything in these pages comes back to one idea. Strategy is not planning. A plan is a checklist you write once and defend forever. A strategy is a theory you test, refine, and sometimes throw out entirely once the market tells you it was wrong. The businesses that plateau are usually the ones still defending a plan from three years ago. The businesses that keep climbing are the ones treating their strategy like the living thing it actually is.

Along the way we walked through a stadium full of football fans, a broker selling boats to people with more money than free time, and a vegan food company trying not to get lost in a crowded aisle. Different industries, different audiences, same underlying questions. Who actually buys from you, what do they value, and does your business model, your product, and your client genuinely live in symbiosis, or are you just hoping they do.

None of this ever fully finishes, and that is not a flaw in the process, it is the process. You will solve this problem and it will hand you a slightly smaller, slightly more interesting one. Growth is fun like that.

If nothing else, I hope you leave this book a little less comfortable with whatever plateau you were quietly settling into, and a little more curious about what a real strategy, built on observation instead of assumption, could do for the business and the life you are actually trying to build.

Now go take the assessment on the next page. Let's see where you really stand.

THE VIIBROOK BRAND HEALTH CHECK-IN

Ok, before you close this book, take out a piece of paper, or if you're like me and lose paper the second you set it down, open the notes app on your phone.

We're going to do a quick self-assessment. Fifteen questions, five pillars, one number at the end that will either make you feel great or make you slightly uncomfortable. Both are useful.

For each statement below, rate yourself honestly from 1 to 5:

1 = Not even close / Never

2 = Rarely

3 = Sometimes / Somewhat

4 = Often / Mostly

5 = Absolutely / Always

No one is grading you but you, so lying just means you'll skip the section you actually need most. I've seen it happen. Don't be that person.

1 / 5 BASIC THEORY

1. I can explain, in a sentence or two, why my product, my business model, and my ideal client actually fit together, not just that they happen to coexist.
2. My marketing and my sales process complement each other. Someone who loves our ads doesn't get whiplash when they actually talk to us or buy from us.
3. I know where my business currently sits on the growth-plateau-decline cycle, and I'm not just assuming the line goes up forever.

2 / 5 REFINEMENT

1. I go back and sharpen our brand messaging based on what we've learned, instead of setting it once and never touching it again.
2. I know our unique value proposition for each major audience segment we serve, not just one generic pitch I say to everybody.
3. When something isn't working, I can usually pinpoint what to adjust instead of scrapping the whole strategy and starting over.

3 / 5 OBSERVATIONS

1. I actively track how customers discover us, rather than guessing or assuming it's "probably Instagram."
2. I notice the seasonal or cyclical patterns in our business and plan around them instead of being surprised by them every single year.
3. I base decisions on what customers actually do, not on what I feel like

they should want.

4 / 5 OPPORTUNITIES

1. I know which of our marketing channels are actually producing results, and I'm not just spreading budget evenly out of habit.
2. I've identified at least one underserved segment or emerging trend we could speak to without diluting our core brand.
3. We test new channels or messaging on a schedule, on purpose, instead of only reacting once something breaks.

5 / 5 KNOWLEDGE

1. I could describe my ideal customer's money, time, attention, and values in real detail, not just a vague demographic like "women 25-45."
2. I have an actual living strategy, a theory I test and adjust, as opposed to a static plan I wrote once and filed away.
3. I'm at peace with the fact that new problems will keep showing up as we grow, and I see that as a sign of progress, not failure.

6 / 5 SCORING YOUR RESULTS

Add up all fifteen answers. Your raw total will land somewhere between 15 and 75.

Now do this bit of math:

Score = (Raw Total ÷ 75) × 100

Example: a raw total of 52 gives you (52 ÷ 75) × 100 = 69.3, which we'll round to 69 out of 100.

7 / 5 WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

85-100: You're basically already living the VIIBrook life.

Minor refinements only. You probably highlighted parts of this book just to nod along with me. Keep going, and don't get comfortable, comfortable is where the plateau lives.

65-84: Solid bones, a few loose boards.

You've got real strategy happening, but there are one or two pillars dragging your score down. Go back and reread whichever section had your lowest average, that's your homework.

45-64: You're flying the plane while building the wings.

This is the most common score, and it's not an insult, it's most businesses. You have pieces of a strategy but not a full theory yet. This is exactly the gap the VIIBrook framework closes.

20-44: Flying blind with the lights off.

Your business may still be working, but it's working despite your strategy, not because of it. High risk of plateau or decline once something external shifts. Time for a real audit, starting back at Basic Theory.

(Quick note: the true floor on this quiz is 20, not 0, because you can't hit 15 unless you actually sat down and did the exercise honestly. That alone puts you ahead of most people, so don't panic.)

If your score has you wanting a second opinion, or you'd rather have someone go through this with you line by line, that's exactly what the Business Strategy Assessment Session below is for.

Session Overview: Our Business Strategy Assessment Session is designed to provide a detailed evaluation of your company's current state and identify opportunities for growth and improvement. During this session, we will delve into various aspects of your business, including branding, customer engagement, market positioning, and strategic planning. Our goal is to equip you with actionable insights and a clear roadmap for achieving your business objectives.

Key Components of the Assessment:

1. Introduction to VIIBrook Framework:

> ◦ We will begin by introducing the VIIBrook framework, which encompasses seven key principles for effective branding and business strategy: Basic Theory, Refinement, Observations, Opportunities, and Knowledge.

1. Business Model Analysis:

> ◦ Assess the alignment between your business model, product/service offerings, and target audience.
>
> ◦ Identify potential areas for improvement to ensure a symbiotic relationship between these elements.

1. Customer Loyalty and Engagement:

> ◦ Evaluate your current customer engagement strategies and loyalty programs. ○ Develop strategies to build stronger, long-lasting relationships with your customers.

1. Data-Driven Decision Making:

> ◦ Analyze existing market data and customer behavior to inform strategic decisions.
>
> ◦ Discuss how to leverage data to create unique value propositions and refine your business model.

1. Strategy vs. Planning:

> ◦ Clarify the distinction between strategy and planning.
>
> ◦ Equip you with the skills to develop strategic thinking and make informed decisions.

1. Branding and Market Positioning:

> ◦ Conduct a comprehensive review of your branding and marketing strategies. ○ Identify opportunities to enhance brand loyalty and audience engagement. 7. Managing Business Cycles:
>
> ◦ Provide insights into managing business growth and cycles effectively. ○ Discuss the importance of patience, data collection, and making informed adjustments.

1. Continuous Improvement:

> ◦ Emphasize the need for ongoing observation and adaptation.

> ◦ Develop a plan for regular assessment and refinement of your business strategies.

Deliverable: At the conclusion of the assessment session, you will receive a comprehensive report that includes:

> ◦ An executive summary of key findings and insights.
>
> ◦ A detailed analysis of your business model, branding, and customer engagement strategies.
>
> ◦ Actionable recommendations for improving customer loyalty, market positioning, and strategic planning.
>
> ◦ A roadmap for implementing the VIIBrook framework and achieving your business objectives.
>
> ◦ Data-driven insights and suggested metrics for ongoing performance evaluation. ● Practical strategies for continuous improvement and adaptation to market changes.

Outcome: By participating in the Business Strategy Assessment Session, you will gain a deep understanding of your business's strengths and areas for improvement. The comprehensive report will serve as a valuable resource, guiding you through the implementation of effective strategies and ensuring sustained growth and success.

Strategy is not Planning · VIIBrook