

# **SIMPLY BETTER**

## **Winning and Keeping Customers By Delivering What Matters Most**

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The Web site for this book is at [www.simply-better.biz](http://www.simply-better.biz).

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**MAIN IDEA**

The benefits of differentiation have been overstated. Instead of wanting something unique or even a cutting edge product, most customers simply want a quality product at a fair price which does what it promises consistently well. Therefore, to prosper, don't obsess over trivial points of difference, gimmicks, branding or outside-the-box thinking. Instead, do the basics well. Get close to your customers, understand what matters most to them and then deliver that better than your competition.

In the real world, successful differentiation isn't about unique selling propositions or "bells and whistles". A good product will always stand out on the strength of attentive service, on-time delivery and consistently good levels of quality. Do the basics well. Attempting to be unique might be fun and even exciting, but it won't automatically lead to business success. Only consistently exceeding the customer's expectations will deliver long-term success.

To achieve this in practice, there are six rules to keep in mind:

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| The<br>Six Rules<br>For<br>Becoming<br>Simply<br>Better | 1 | Obsess over the category benefits, not your own individual brand benefits    |
|   | 2 | Think simplicity, not sophistication – because that's how customers think    |
|   | 3 | Look at how customers make buying decisions first and foremost               |
|   | 4 | Focus more on your opportunities and less on your competitive threats        |
|   | 5 | Use outside-the-box advertising only when your delivery systems are in place |
|   | 6 | Regularly immerse yourself in the realities of the marketplace               |

**Rule #1 – Obsess over the category benefits, not your own individual brand benefits . . . . . Page 2**

Customers really don't buy a brand because it offers features others don't. Instead, customers make a category purchase of whichever product fills their needs and offers the best combination of benefits. With this in mind, you should spend less time worrying about brand differentiation and more time unearthing the customer's category needs. Then focus on meeting those category needs better than anyone else.

**Rule #2 – Think simplicity, not sophistication – because that's how customers think . . . . . Page 3**

In reality, customers see your brand in very simple terms, in terms of their overall experience with your business. The challenge is to meet their expectations reliably and consistently. When that happens, they will buy again and again, and tell their friends. It doesn't get any better than that.

**Rule #3 – Look at how customers make buying decisions first and foremost. . . . . Page 4**

Think twice before you engage in some creative outside-the-box thinking. Be realistic rather than clever. Look at how customers genuinely make buying decisions and monitor your performance in delivering the generic category benefits by comparison with your competitors. Don't take your eye off the ball – how to create value for your customers.

**Rule #4 – Focus more on your opportunities and less on your competitive threats . . . . . Page 5**

Every industry is constantly evolving as new technologies arrive, different regulations take effect and changes in the customer base occur. Don't become either too cautious or too complacent. Instead, keep evolving your business. Stay focused on doing whatever it takes to provide the benefits that customers are willing to pay for, even if that means cannibalizing your existing business to do it. This is the only way to look at change as an opportunity rather than a threat.

**Rule #5 – Use outside-the-box advertising only when your delivery systems are in place . . . . . Page 6**

To get noticed in the marketplace, you don't advertise the fact that you deliver the generic category benefits better than everyone else. That will get lost in all the background noise and besides, consumers will expect every company in your industry to say that. Instead, you need some memorable, completely outside-the-box marketing communications. The only way to cut through the clutter is to be distinctive yet relevant – a hard combination to master. Your product doesn't need to be distinctive but your advertising most certainly does.

**Rule #6 – Regularly immerse yourself in the realities of the marketplace. . . . . Pages 7 - 8**

To stay customer-focused, insist that everyone in your organization gets out and talks with real live customers on a regular basis. This is too important a fact finding mission to be left just to the sales and marketing people, or to be outsourced to others. Instead, make it a priority to visit customers on their own turf and observe them buying and using your products and those of your competitors. The insights this will generate will energize you and keep you focused on what really matters rather than all of the peripheral issues.

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