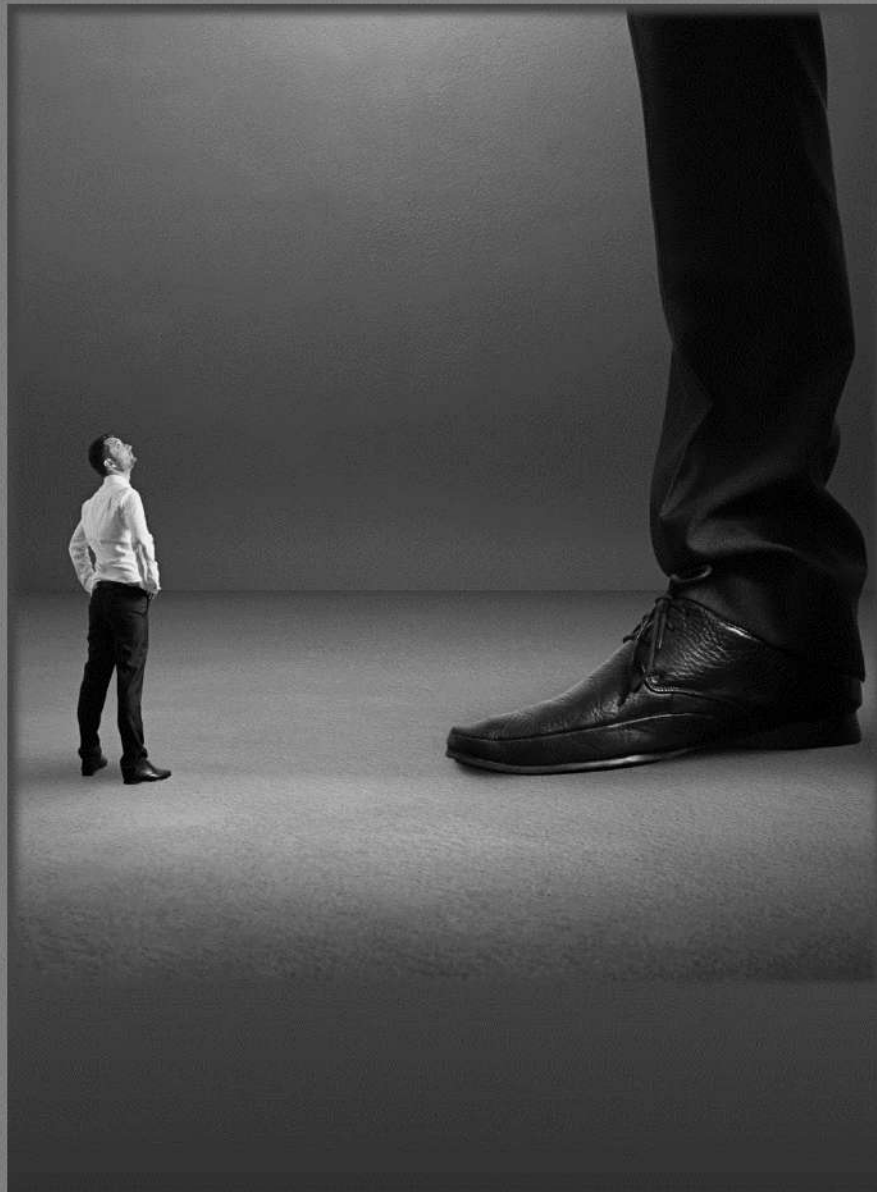




REVEALED

HOW TO STOP GREEDY CORPORATE BRANDS CRUSHING YOUR BUSINESS

Chris Marrington and Sue Lerena

You Can't Out-Spend Them, But You Can Out-Think Them:

BIG BRAND TRICKS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Introduction

In the competitive business landscape, big brands with their massive budgets and resources can often intimidate small businesses. They constantly seek new customers and markets to fuel their growth, which could potentially pose a threat to smaller players.

However, there's a way to level the playing field. By adopting the mindset of big brand owners and utilizing their marketing techniques, small businesses can out-think and outmanoeuvre their larger counterparts.

In this extract from our new e-book, we'll delve into the strategies used by big brands and provide insights on how small businesses can protect their investment and thrive in their respective markets.

Meet the experts

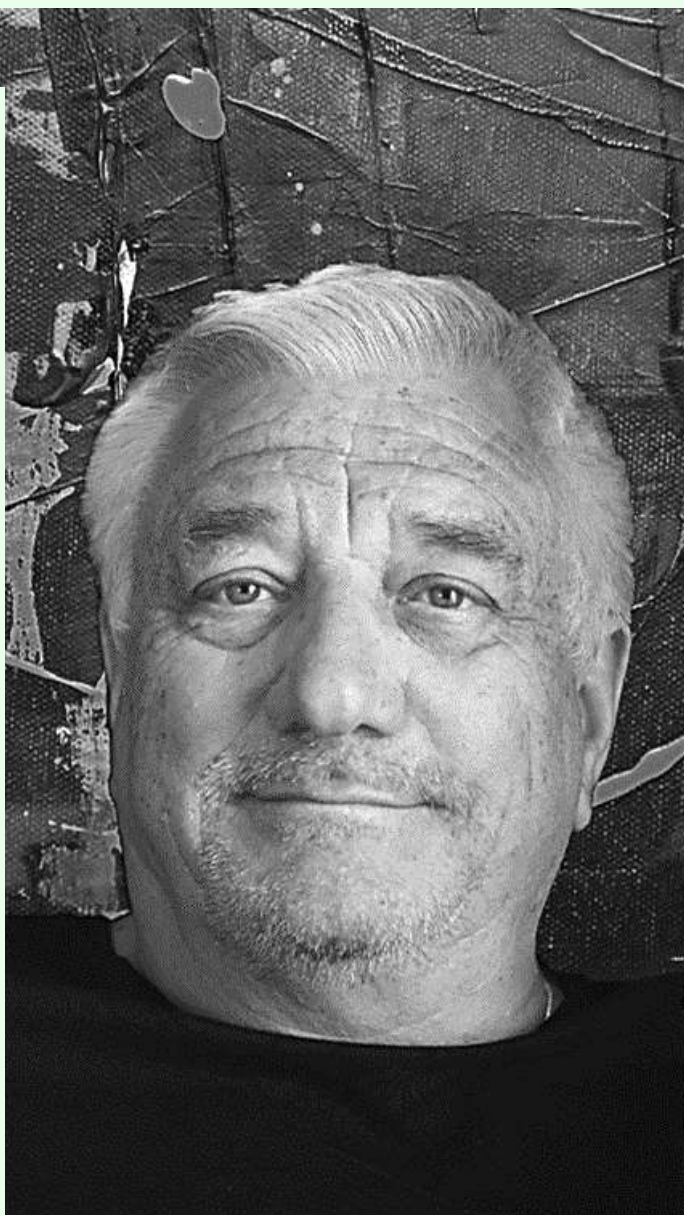
Our team consists of industry veterans with decades of experience in copywriting, creative strategy development, market research, and advertising.

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Chris Marrington has four decades of experience in copywriting, creative strategy development and making high performance advertising for leading global brands.

He has managed several leading local and global advertising agencies including Grey Global Inc handling famous brands such as BMW, Ford, Mazda, Pedigree, Snickers, Uncle Ben's (now Ben's Original), Johnson & Johnson, De Beers & Anglo American.

His work has received nearly 100 awards, including a Bronze Lion from the Cannes Advertising Film Festival. He has extensive experience in consulting for small and medium size clients in several countries.



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Sue Lerena has four decades of experience in all forms of market research, strategy planning and advertising.

Her international blue-chip clients include Unilever, Johnson & Johnson, Toyota, Visa, Proctor & Gamble, Nando's, and others. S

he has worked in 18 countries around the world, helping to develop international strategies.

She ran projects with major banks to help their small business customers develop and grow.

For twenty years, Sue owned and managed her own successful consumer research consultancy.



BIG BRAND TRICK #1: IDENTIFY YOUR CUSTOMERS:

Understanding your customers is crucial for sustained success. Big brands place great emphasis on numbers, constantly seeking growth and market share. They segment their customers based on demographic factors such as age, marital status, sex, and location. This segmentation allows them to target specific customer groups with tailored marketing messages. You, as a small business owner should adopt a similar approach to survival and growth.



Creating a customer avatar:

To effectively engage their target audience, big brands create detailed customer avatars. By visualizing their ideal customers, they gain insights into their needs, preferences, and psychographics (attitudes and desires).

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This understanding enables them to design advertising and promotions that resonate with their customers on a deeper level. For example, a pizza chain will likely identify their primary target customer as a young adult, seeking a casual dining experience with friends.

A secondary market might be parents with children who are keen on a simple, casual meal eaten out or delivered to their home.

They will develop different strategies to persuade these different market segments to favor their brand.

Applying customer insights to your business:

Service-oriented businesses, such as appliance repairers or plumbers, should also invest in understanding their customers' profiles. By visiting their customers' homes or workplaces, they can gauge income groups and spending capacity, allowing for more targeted marketing efforts.

Small businesses have the advantage of focusing on niche markets that big brands may overlook. By identifying and serving a specific customer segment, they can differentiate themselves and cultivate a loyal customer base.

Developing a go-to-market strategy:

Once you have a clear understanding of your customers through the customer avatar exercise, it's time to align your business offering and marketing strategy accordingly.

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By incorporating the insights gained, you can tailor your products or services to meet customer needs and preferences effectively. This customer-centric approach enables small businesses to deliver value and establish a competitive edge.

While big brands may seem formidable, your small business can thrive by adopting similar strategies scaled to your objectives. By identifying your target customers, creating customer avatars, and utilizing customer insights to drive your business offerings, you can establish your business in the relevant niche markets.

Remember, value is key across all industries. By consistently delivering value to customers, you can build a loyal customer base and protect your investment and legacy. Embrace the power of big brand thinking and transform your small business into a force to be reckoned with.

BIG BRAND TRICK #2: FINE TUNE YOUR BUSINESS OFFERING

In the world of marketing, making small adjustments to your business offering can significantly impact your customer appeal. This tactic is an equally important one for large and small brands.

However, you must carefully think through any changes you plan to make. Even super professional global marketers make embarrassing mistakes from time to time.

A famous example is Procter & Gamble's failed diaper launch in Japan. They included on their packaging the familiar symbol of a stork bringing a baby into the world. This alarmed and confused Japanese shoppers.

According to their folklore, babies are carried by giant floating peaches! To avoid such potentially damaging missteps, it is crucial to know your customers well before reaching out to them.

The 4Ps and 3Cs

One effective framework to optimize your business offering is the **4Ps framework**, which has been guiding marketers for generations. The 4 Ps stand for **Product, Price, Place, and Promotion**, collectively known as the marketing mix.

These elements should be integrated with the **3Cs—Company, Competitors, and Customers**. The 4Ps framework, combined with the 3Cs, provides a strategic blueprint for successful marketing.

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Product is the first element of the **4Ps framework**. It involves describing your product's features and benefits, as well as stating what it does and what it doesn't do. Clear and precise product descriptions are essential to avoid scope creep (a gradual blurring of the main purpose of a product or service) and to ensure a consistent understanding among stakeholders.

Differentiating between product or service features and their benefits is crucial in conveying value to customers in different market segments.

A BONUS TRICK - Consider Redefining Your Niche.

By reimagining your business from the customer's perspective, you can uncover new opportunities and expand your offerings. For example, instead of simply stating that you run a car wash, you can reframe it as "I make dirty vehicles clean."

This shift in perspective allows you to think beyond cars and cater to a broader market, such as motorcycles, vans, boats, RVs, and trucks. By adapting your services to meet the needs of various vehicle owners, you can transform the scope of your business and attract a wider customer base.

The ultimate re-imagined product

This familiar product was invented in the early 1950s as a simple penetrating oil and water displacer. Its original function was to protect missiles from rust.

Launched as a consumer product in 1958, users of WD40 have since then identified over 2,000 applications, from silencing squeaky hinges to removing a boa constrictor from an engine compartment. (Really.)



This incredible product has been evolving for seventy years

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Price is another critical aspect of the marketing mix. Setting the right price requires careful consideration. Going too low may imply inferior quality, while being too ambitious may simply put you beyond the reach of regular customers. Explore different pricing strategies to find the optimal balance between value and profitability. Surprise price promotions can also create differentiation and attract customers.

Promotion involves raising awareness and creating a preference for your product or service. While big brands can invest in various promotional activities, small businesses need to be more resourceful.

Identifying cost-effective promotional methods such as email marketing, social media, blogs, local sponsorships, and word-of-mouth campaigns can help you reach your target audience without breaking the bank. Maintaining a checklist of promotional opportunities can ensure consistent marketing efforts and encourage bold growth strategies.

Place refers to the distribution model of your product or service. For store owners, this usually entails ordering stock, arranging displays, and attracting customers to physical locations or delivering to their homes or workplaces. However, even in traditional distribution chains like this, there's room for new creative ideas. Exploring options like off-site product displays, direct sales, and bulk selling can enhance the distribution process and expand your reach.

The 3Cs—Company, Competitors, and Customers—are integral to understanding your business context.

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Defining your **company's** mission and vision provides a clear purpose and future direction. Describing your company's culture, location, and image helps shape the overall customer experience. Taking the time to develop policies for customer complaints, communication channels, and employee dress code contributes to a consistent and positive brand image.

Customers should always be at the center of your business planning.

Understanding their needs, preferences, and behaviors is crucial for effective marketing. Developing customer avatars, based on research and observation, helps create a detailed profile of your target audience.

Considering factors such as their media preferences, lifestyle, worries, and aspirations enables you to tailor your offerings to their specific desires. By truly understanding your customers, you can craft marketing campaigns that resonate and deliver value.

Lastly, stay aware of your **competitors**. Big brands take this very seriously. Often, they hire independent 'secret shoppers' from specialized research firms. These anonymous fieldworkers buy competitors' products or use their services, record their experiences in fine detail and deliver a consolidated feedback report.

You can run a simplified version of this project. Just ask friends and family to do the research for you and give you their impressions and suggestions.

Creating a clearly defined brand and staying ahead of the game are indeed important strategies for big brands and small businesses alike.

BIG BRAND TRICK #3: CREATE A CLEARLY DEFINED BRAND

Develop a distinctive brand voice: Determine the tone and style of your messaging that aligns with your brand's personality and resonates with your target audience.



This little take-out restaurant has brilliantly combined its brightly decorated fleet of delivery cars with matching signage and awnings. They have created a strong brand identity and an immediate impact on a quiet suburban street. Note that each of their little cars acts as a bright and attractive mobile billboard.

Establish a unique **selling proposition (USP)**: Identify and promote a specific benefit or advantage that sets your product or service apart from competitors. Make sure you can provide proof to support your claim.

Focus on being **the best in your market**: Even if you can't compete globally, strive to offer the best product or service in your local area. Highlighting your superiority within a specific region can be a compelling proposition.

Leverage testimonials and guarantees: Genuine testimonials from satisfied customers can add credibility to your brand. Additionally, offering guarantees or promises of exceptional service can instill confidence in potential customers.

BIG BRAND TRICK #4: KEEP AHEAD OF THE GAME

Stay informed about market trends: Use the internet and social media to stay updated on emerging trends, changing customer preferences, and new brands in your industry. This knowledge can help you adapt and evolve your strategic plans.

Monitor competitors: Keep a close eye on your competitors' activities by following them on social media, visiting their websites, and gathering information about their sales, service levels, and product quality. Look for opportunities to collaborate with non-competitors who offer the opportunity to diversify or expand your offering.

Use every resource to your advantage: make the most of your retail store window as a billboard to display prices and special offers. Look for small victories every day to stay energized and focused on staying competitive.

BIG BRAND TRICK #5: BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS

Embrace customer-centricity: Put the customer at the center of your marketing efforts and focus on understanding their needs, preferences, and behaviors. Deliver exceptional customer experiences to build trust and loyalty.

Utilize content marketing: Create valuable and relevant content to engage your target audience. Educate, entertain, and build brand awareness through storytelling and informative materials.

Leverage data-driven marketing: Collect and analyze customer data to personalize your marketing efforts and deliver targeted content. While larger brands may have extensive resources for data analysis, small businesses can still utilize available data to share relevant content with their audience.

Embrace multimedia marketing: Provide a seamless and integrated experience across different marketing channels, ensuring consistency in your brand identity and messaging.

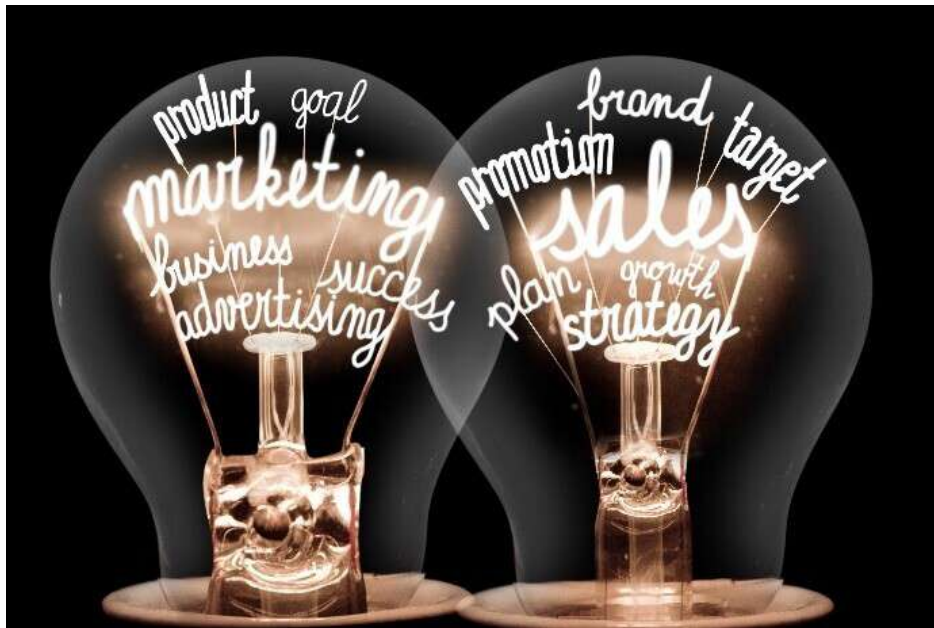
Consider experience marketing: Design unique and interactive brand experiences to engage customers, such as sponsored events, pop-up stores, and product sampling. Adapt these strategies to suit your budget and customer profile.

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Exploit social media marketing: Make use of social media platforms to build brand awareness, encourage conversations, and offer unique or special promotions to attract customer engagement.

Adopt sustainability practices and purpose-driven marketing: Consider social and environmental responsibility as part of your business operations. Support causes aligned with your values and make eco-friendly choices when possible.

Remember, while new ideas and trends can be valuable, the foundational principles of the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) and 3Cs (Company, Competitors, Customers) still provide a solid framework for developing your marketing strategy. Be open to new ideas, but ensure they align with your overall business goals and target audience.



When looking for new ideas think about all aspects of your business, not just your product.

BUSINESS TRICK #6: DEVELOP A GROWTH STRATEGY

Focus on acquiring new customers through various methods such as opening new branches, mergers, or marketing campaigns.

Increase sales to existing customers by identifying new products or services to offer and creating special offers or promotions.

Develop loyalty programs and consider offering incentives to recapture lapsed customers.

Remember: If you're not growing you're standing still, and if you're standing still you're going backwards.



BUSINESS TRICK #7: MANAGE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Engage customers through sampling, personalized communication, and loyalty programs.

Address and resolve customer complaints or issues promptly and empathetically.

Stay in touch with lapsed customers after resolving problems to ensure their satisfaction and build stronger relationships.

If you have a database of customers, it's easy to email or text them with your comeback offer. You can use a simple idea like this for social media advertising or as part of your e-mailing campaign.

If you have a postal list of account customers, you can create a leaflet and mail it. Or if you have a retail store, use it as a window poster.



BUSINESS TRICK #8: MANAGE RISK

Understand that all businesses face risks, and it's important to have a comprehensive risk management plan.

Identify different types of risks, such as strategic, compliance, operational, and reputational, and develop strategies to mitigate their impact.

Conduct a thorough risk assessment and consider potential threats specific to your business.

BUSINESS TRICK #9: HARNESS THE POWER OF AI

Utilize advanced AI platforms like ChatGPT to enhance advertising, marketing, customer interactions, and data analysis.

Leverage AI to refine target advertising, craft persuasive marketing copy, manage social media, personalize customer interactions, and gain insights from data analysis.

It's not a fad or a fashion. AI is here to stay and far from running scared we must all embrace its uncertainty. Because it has the potential to change your world.

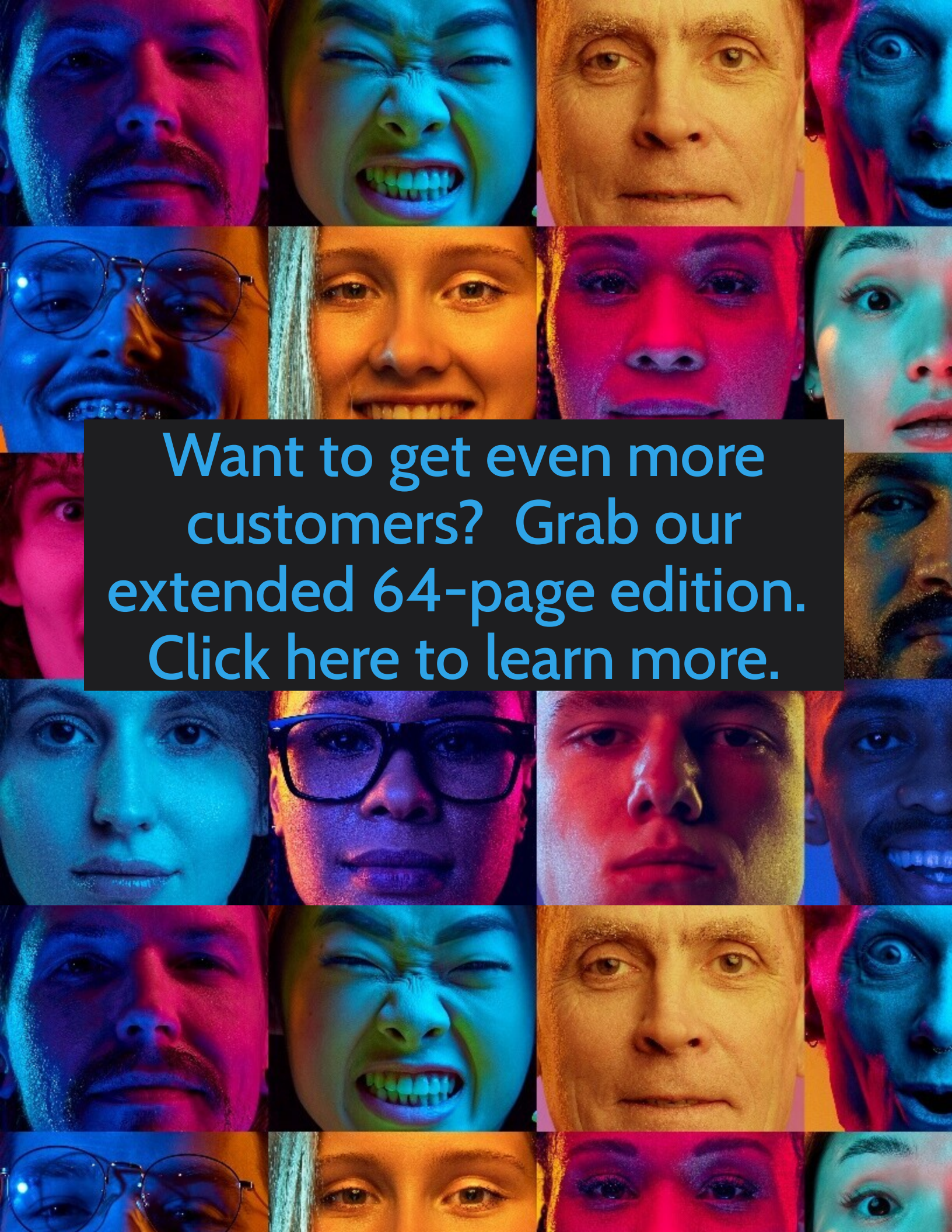
BUSINESS TRICK #10: GET YOURSELF A MARKETING PARTNER

Seek guidance from experienced marketing consultants who can provide objective advice based on their expertise.

Benefit from services such as customer avatar creation, research assistance, marketing planning, advertising material creation, brand development, customer acquisition and retention strategies, and more.

Learn to focus on niche markets, develop a unique brand identity, create personalized customer experiences, emphasize local connections, utilize social media and digital marketing, and protect your intellectual property.

These tricks and strategies can help businesses grow, manage customer relationships, mitigate risks, leverage AI technologies, and seek professional marketing guidance.

A collage of diverse human faces, including men and women of various ethnicities, with expressions ranging from neutral to smiling and wincing. The faces are set against a background of vibrant, multi-colored lighting (red, blue, green, yellow) that creates a dynamic and inclusive atmosphere.

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