

## Is Your Business **Weird** Enough?

(Or are you just doing what everyone else is doing?)

### Can you spot what's **unusual** about these businesses?

- A doctor who gives her email address to her patients...
- A soap company that distributes samples at women's shelters ...
- A beverage company that stages a faux wedding to capture the hearts of a jaded sales force...
- A wine company that engages an art college to develop packaging for its new line of premium wines...
- An ice cream shop that sings to its customers ...

All of these companies have embraced Grassroots Innovation principles to create buzz and opportunity for themselves. They take risks, use creative approaches, and carve their own path through the marketplace jungle. What can we learn from them?

### Is your business **remarkable** or just ordinary?

Let's be honest. Most businesses operate on the premise that they need to offer decent products and services at a decent price. We try to please everyone, because, well, "everyone could be our customer." If there are competitive forces at work, we lower our prices to stay in the game. We put our energy into cost reduction. We train our customers to expect more and to pay less. It's a vicious cycle.

### Are you **capitalizing** on the new rules of marketing?

Seth Godin, marketing guru and author of *The Purple Cow*, redefines the rules of marketing as follows:

- **Old Rule:** Create safe, ordinary products and combine them with great marketing.
- **New Rule:** Create remarkable products that the right people seek out.

Imagine that idea – customers actually seeking you out. All you have to do is create remarkable products and services. "Remarkable" may seem like a daunting target, but it will actually cost you less and will bring you greater reward and profits.

### Why should you care about **The 6 Imperatives of Grassroots Innovation™**?

The grassroots approach to marketing used to be the only alternative available to companies with limited budgets to invest. Today it has become the best way for companies of all sizes (including global giants like Pepsi) to market their wares. Companies that are making inroads with customers and in new markets are employing one or all of *The 6 Imperatives of Grassroots Innovation™*. Check out these success stories:

- © **get Weird.** Coldstone Creamery has created "ice cream theater" by singing to its customers for tips and entertaining customers by juggling ice cream scoopers like in the 1988 Tom Cruise film "*Cocktail*." And if that's not enough, they make a personal guarantee that if you are not completely satisfied with their "creation," they'll make you another one. I bet their CFO loves that marketing idea. It's working though– check it out at a shop near you or visit [www.coldstonecreamery.com](http://www.coldstonecreamery.com)

- ⊙ **get Creative.** Delicato Vineyards engaged 4<sup>th</sup> year art students at the Academy of Arts College in San Francisco to brand and package their new line of super premium wines. With a \$5,000 student scholarship and a \$5,000 donation to the school, the winery ended up with a great looking package and brand name (Encore by Monterra), a PR event, and compelling story for launch. This was a better than the alternative--hiring a traditional package design firm and spending \$50,000. Read all about it at [www.delicato.com/encore](http://www.delicato.com/encore).
- ⊙ **get Personal.** SoapWorks founder Amilya Antonetti has successfully carved a niche for herself in the highly competitive laundry soap category dominated by giants like Procter and Gamble. With a small investment in local radio advertising, Ms. Antonetti soon become a regular talk show guest, giving listeners advice on alternatives for household cleaning challenges. She gave samples of her product to parents at Children’s hospitals and emergency shelters, knowing that by helping others, she in turn would be rewarded. *Inc.* magazine featured her remarkable business success in its October 2000 issue. Check it out at <http://www.inc.com/magazine/20001001/20439.html>.
- ⊙ **get Risky.** Meet Joe Doria Jr., founder of Glaceau VitaminWater. Joe came up with a great idea one morning and, without realizing it, had taken on the likes of Coke and Pepsi. Through innovative grassroots marketing and personal passion, Joe has built a \$350+ million business and created a new category in vitamin-flavored water. *The Wall Street Journal* also recognized Joe’s bold, risky efforts in a feature article (*WSJ*, written by Gwendolyn Bounds on January 30, 2006).
- ⊙ **get Smart.** Melaleuca is a manufacturing company focused on wellness. They have built a consumer products business to \$700 million in 20 years without spending any money on traditional advertising or retail distribution. Their secret? Make great products that people use every day and give them a powerful reason to “switch stores” and shop through their catalog and on-line channel. They also treat their customers like shareholders. They allow their customers to create passive residual income for themselves. Insurance agents first invented the concept. (It works great for them.) Why not for the rest of us? Here’s your chance to compete with Wal-Mart. Switch stores and buy from your own store.
- ⊙ **get Connected.** To your customers, to the larger market place, to your local community. You must learn to master the art of networking – defined as “building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships *before* you need them.” Remember to also embody the spirit of networking: “helping others and asking for help.” Don’t forget to work both sides of the equation.
- ⊙ *If all else fails...get Help.* There are many talented marketing professionals out there to assist you. Seek their advice and allow them to help you formulate your strategic plan *before* you launch into tactical activity. Remember, thinking should always precede doing. Activity alone will not grow your business.

## So, are you prepared to do what it takes to be more **successful**?

You must be willing to push yourself beyond your comfort zone to reap the rewards of growth and innovation. Grassroots Innovation is a great place to start. It’s where the fun and future is. Why not join in?



**About the Writer:** Kathy McAfee is **America’s Marketing Motivator** and president of Kmc Brand Innovation, LLC, an executive presentation coaching and consulting company specializing in driving growth through innovation and motivation. Her company helps business executives, entrepreneurs, corporate professionals, and community leaders become the recognized leaders in their field by leveraging speaking, presenting, networking, branding, and grassroots innovation to their advantage. With an expertise in high engagement presentations and professional networking, she is known as “**America’s Marketing Motivator.**” To learn more, please visit [www.MarketingMotivator.net](http://www.MarketingMotivator.net) or contact her at (860) 408-0033.