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B2B STRAIGHT UP

Going for a revolution? Before you storm the gates...

Are you working for a B2B brand offering a new technology or service no one's heard of? Fear not. **Kimon Lycos** explains how you can convert the masses.

The French, they gave us silly accents, glorious vistas and the spirit of revolutions. The way the French cracked on in 1789 taught us that if you're sick of something and believe you have a better idea, you have to shake things up to dump the status quo. Unfortunately, in B2B marketing, you can't willy-nilly cut the heads off people who block your progress, no matter how much you feel the world would be a better place. With our current legal system, you have to be a bit more strategic to get your revolution going.

Technology, for instance, can enable us to hold our own revolutions to change the world and take leaps into new markets begging to be exploited. Sometimes markets are stuck in ways that just don't work, at times stupidly so. That's when the forces of a revolution gather because rank stupidity that does not change stirs the passion of those who desire change. Inventions sprout forth and new technology powers new ways, which requires new thinking and in turn can generate some really exciting changes.

And then someone has to market it and here the revolution can get shaky, because revolutions in technology and innovation often require a vast change in people's thinking and conceptualisation, along with a dose of bravery for being the first to try something new.

Imagine if the current buying behaviour of corporations and government was applied to fire. We would all still be eating raw meat and

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freezing our bums off. In fact, let's quickly run a ruler over that radical idea of 'fire', a genuine revolution of technology in light of modern day procurement procedures.

1. Risk-management policy, never be the first to use – well, that would mean every other cave will be enjoying pork chops, without worrying about getting worms.

2. Need to get three competing offers, open tender policy – does that mean you have to go out, teach two others how to make fire, hand over the IP and then pray that you don't get undercut?

3. It's non-compliant to tender – no kidding! It's non-compliant because no one has ever done fire before! Perhaps if the underdeveloped sapiens who did the tender did so with an understanding of what they needed to achieve...

Rampant cynicism aside, no matter how cool, brilliant or even needed the revolution is, there will always be resistance to change

because it feels safer to stick to old ways. Despite what feels like open hostility towards new ways, you can be successful at marketing a revolution and you don't need to cut off anyone's head with mad old ladies watching on while knitting.

One company that comes to mind is Alcidion, which has been leading a much-needed revolution in health. The founders occupied senior positions in healthcare and grew weary witnessing carnage (14,000 preventable deaths per year in Australian hospitals) and preventable harm (40 percent of test results are not tracked in Australian hospitals). The revolution they started was based upon IT, something that was traditionally a real boogiemanager to healthcare for two good reasons. One, IT systems in healthcare are expensive and follow a 'bigger is better' approach. Two, IT has always had a hard time gaining a footprint across multi vendor systems, with countless horror stories of massive project overruns.

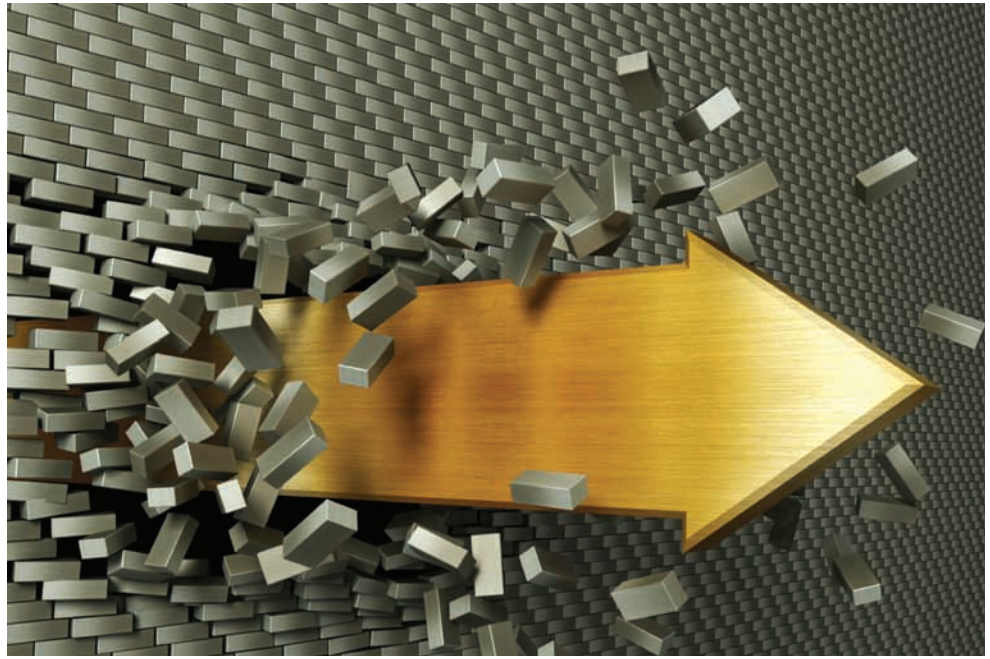
Their revolution is called Miya, which provides clinical decision support. Essentially Miya is there as a guide for doctors, who quite frankly are among the most stressed out people on the planet. Currently they use pen, paper and other such 'systems' to recall who you are, what's wrong with you, what medication you are on, what tests they have ordered and what tests you have received, and then try to draw a conclusion about what to do with you. Miya is there to not only remember and remind them, but also offer best practice advice. Hooray for Miya!

The road to acceptance and now full commercialisation of Alcideon's revolution provides us with valuable insights on how to market and sell a revolution. It's vital not to think that everyone will consider your revolution to be as important as you do. And while your technology is incredible and the solution unmatched, people still need to know the answer to a fundamental question – what's in it for them?

In B2B, this means multilevel decision-making with multiple issues. What a clinician loves can be worlds away from what bakes a bean counter's cookies. For example, Miya is about patient safety, but it would be foolhardy to assume everyone thinks that is important. A bureaucrat can be more worried about recovering costs, so if you have no message or sales argument for them, you're stuffed.

Don't assume that people will catch on. If it's a revolution and change is in the air, accept that it will take time for people to shift their minds. You can speed this up considerably by not talking 'around' the issues, reeling off historical and technical facts, but discussing directly what it all means and how they will benefit. Best of all, involve them in the revolution, meaning, the actual deliverable solution.

Alcideon's smart approach has been to humanise the technology, by giving it a human name, Miya. And in their dealings with senior clinicians, hospital administrators and politicians have been provided with meaningful engagement about how they can join the revolution and play a role in raising the quality of healthcare, from a human and fiscal perspective.



Understandably, this can be completely maddening for the innovator, who knows the issues and knows the solution, yet can't get to second base. The common complaint is, local innovation in Australia is ignored, and can take five years of overseas success before heading home again. While I fully believe this situation is due mostly to stupidity at senior buying levels, such as enjoying overseas junkets to 'research' markets and conduct 'studies' of suppliers (as one former corporate high-flyer confessed, "It's more fun to buy in San Diego, than down the road"), there is a lot of 'huh?' marketing out there, preventing people from understanding what it is that's being offered.

And, at the end of the day, people only know what you tell them. Add to that, if it's a revolution, such as a leap in technology, then you have to make darn sure that your message is spot on, or else people can painfully miss the point with ease.

If you have taken the time to develop the next best thing, then you must also take the time to understand the best path to market. If you are a small player then simply for credibility sake, you may need the help of a larger channel partner. With the cost to develop technology being so large, it is worthwhile to consider a whole range of options to help the revolution not just gain ground, but to storm the gates. **M**

Avoid Marketing Redundancies

Marketers are aware of the problem of marketing redundancies, especially the obvious ones; those annoying duplicate records in mailing or telemarketing lists that sneak in to embarrass the marketer, infuriate the recipient and bleed the campaign budget. These duplicates occur with any regularly updated database and most experienced marketers put steps in place to minimize their effect.

The not so obvious marketing redundancies however are usually the ones which don't occur with

the same list, they are the redundancies which occur by marketing to the wrong people time and time again. This does not occur because people buy the wrong lists it occurs when direct

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marketing is performed in isolation, that is to say direct marketing is done without referring to the previous campaign or existing customer lists to suppress or profile the prospects. Many

marketers buy lists as they need them and over the years cycle through the same list more than once. What is often missed is the fact that the same potential prospect can be marketed to for

years, each time with no response, but each time a new list is purchased that prospect is there again ready to suck the profitability out of your campaign with their apathy toward your offerings. Of

course repetition is a key element of direct marketing but only when exercised in a controlled and quantifiable manner. By using DataTools software that allows you to easily exclude these non performing prospects from your campaign you can cut your campaign costs down to a fraction of what they are now and still improve results.

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